







BENGALI PROSE STYLE



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Bengali Prose Style

1800-1857

*(Ramtanu Lahiri Fellowship Lectures
for the year 1919-1920)*

By

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Bengal, Chaitanya and his Companions, Typical Selections
from Old Bengali Literature, Folk Literature
of Bengal, the Bengali Ramayanas,
Banga Bhasa-O-Sahitya,
etc., etc,



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1800-1857

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Published by the
UNIVERSITY OF CALCUTTA

1857

"I am quite convinced that Bengali is one of the great expressive languages of the world, capable of being the vehicle of as great things as any speech of men."

J. D. ANDERSON.

I am a native of the State of New York, and have resided in the City of New York for many years. I am a member of the New York State Bar Association, and have been admitted to the practice of law in the State of New York. I am a member of the New York State Bar Association, and have been admitted to the practice of law in the State of New York.

J. D. ANDERSON.

This book is respectfully dedicated
by the Author
as a tribute of his gratitude and esteem
to
The Hon'ble Justice
SIR ASUTOSH MOOKERJEE, Kt., C.S.I.,
M.A., D.L., D.Sc., Ph.D.,
on his resuming his place as
Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University.

PREFACE

This book was written under exceedingly trying circumstances. The author had a severe attack of influenza in November last and passed through a great crisis, his life having been despaired of for a time. On recovering a little, but while still bed-ridden, he dictated these lectures from his sick-bed to one of his sons—as a means of driving away the feelings of despair and the gloomy thoughts natural to one suffering from such a serious illness. The readers will, it is hoped, excuse the defects and shortcomings that may have arisen under such circumstances. The proofs could not be revised by him with care. It is, however, his duty to acknowledge with thanks the friendly help he received from Mr. C. S. Paterson, M.Sc., who revised some proofs of the first portion of the book. But as he left the city, shortly after the work had been sent to the press, the author could not avail himself of his kind and disinterested help for long.

The author has taken great pains in the preparation of these lectures. Though most of

the authorities consulted have been studied by him from original sources, he has confined his references chiefly to his Typical Selections from old Bengali Literature. He has done so for the convenience of those readers who may wish to read the passages for themselves.

This book, it is feared, will not command a general interest, as the subject has a limited outlook. Its interest is restricted to those students who may wish to acquire a knowledge of the linguistic features of a particular period of our literature. At the same time it is calculated to be of some use to those scholars who want to obtain a thorough knowledge of the ever-changing forms of our progressive speech, and to such, however limited the scope of the present work may be, it may not fail to throw light on important linguistic points involved. Written under peculiar difficulties as this book has been, the achievement of this result was only possible owing to the constant encouragement received from the present Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University to whom the book is dedicated as a token of gratitude.

The readers will see that the subject, of which a brief outline only was given in one of the closing chapters of the author's History of Bengali Language and Literature, has been greatly elaborated by him in the present work, abundant new materials having been brought to

bear upon the topic under discussion, and he hopes that his labour in performing the task will be appreciated.

The author is indebted to his esteemed friend Dr. G. Howells, Principal of the Serampur College, for the picture of Dr. Carey and Pundit Mrityunjay which forms the frontispiece of this book. It is a facsimile of the painting belonging to the Serampur College.

7, BISHWAKOSH LANE,
BAGBAZAR, CALCUTTA. } DINESH CHANDRA SEN.
The 1st June, 1921.

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BENGALI PROSE STYLE

1800-57

Introduction

During a little more than a century that commenced from 1800 A. D., Bengali prose has made an astonishing progress. The wonderful assimilation of the classical element in Vidyasagar's style, perfected by the perennial flow of his emotional sweetness, the gorgeous sweep of Bankim's prose enlivened by a genial poetic enthusiasm, the superior word-painting of Ravindranath,—his style, setting up a new

Some of our best
prose-writers.

ideal of art in our letters,
and, last though not least,
Sarat Chandra's rich colloquial
style, full of the charm of the dialect of the

countryside, and which, while dealing with higher ethics and sociology, shows the marvellous range and capacity of the simple Bengali that we speak in our daily life,—these are some of the treasures and attractions of the modern Bengali prose, of which every Bengali should be justly proud.

The Swadeshi movement commenced in Bengal in the year 1905. Sober people must admit that its attempts have been abortive, causing in many instances numberless woes to Bengali homes. There has, however, been one distinct gain about which there can be but one opinion. It has stimulated the development of Bengali prose in an amazing degree. Every Tom, Dick and Harry became eloquent, suddenly inspired by what is called the 'gift of the gab' and even the grocers and artisans attracted attention by the facile charm of their contributions to our newspapers and magazines. Before the Swadeshi movement, the number of Bengali writers could be counted on the tips of one's fingers, but since then Bengali literature has crossed all barriers and now counts its votaries amongst the high and the low alike. The whole nation seems to have been awakened to a literary consciousness, and monopolisation in literature is now a thing of the past.

But before all this result was won, earnest workers had tried their utmost from the beginning of the 19th century to bring about this happy end in the field of our literature, and it is worth while now to survey the work of those disinterested labourers. It will be like watching the construction of the Taj with materials piled up on the banks of the Jumna by the unwearied efforts of the day-labourers ; for is not the highly refined Bengali prose of the present day as artistic and beautiful as the Taj--wrought indeed not in marble but in words ?

As ours, however, is the task of tracing the development of the Bengali prose style, we shall only incidentally refer to its literary side, mainly dealing with the peculiarities of our language, which has during a full century passed through many interesting forms in the course of its development into modern style.

Bengali prose style from 1800 to 1857 A. D. is one of the subjects of the M.A. Examination in Bengali. The students complained to me in the class in September last that they had no book on the subject to serve as their guide, and I promised to give them one before their examination. I have accordingly taken it up as my subject for the few remaining lectures which

M. A. course in
Indian Vernaculars.

I shall have to deliver to complete my course for the last session as Ramtanu Lahiri Research Fellow. This in brief is the history of the origin of this work.

CHAPTER I

BENGALI PROSE BEFORE RAJA RAMMOHAN ROY

In the year 1801 Dr. Carey in his preface to Kathopakathan classified the
The varieties of spoken forms. spoken dialect of Bengal into five different forms. He refers to the Bengali spoken by the Khānsāmās, Āyās, Vadrals, and women, as presenting dialectical varieties in each case with distinctive peculiarities of its own. "The Khansama or sirkir," writes Dr. Carey, "generally intermixes his language with words derived from Arabic or Persian and some few from corrupted English and Portuguese words"—the style of the Vadrals, he calls "the grave style." In the year 1859 Mr. Marshman wrote in his history of the Sri Ram-pore Mission (Vol. II, pp. 21-22) that Portuguese was the *lingua franca* of all foreign settlements around the Bay of Bengal and was the ordinary medium of conversation between the Europeans and their domestics. The Portuguese had certainly established their ascendancy and at one time made a great political advance amongst

the contending mercantile communities in this country. The nation of Columbus, Vasco de Gama and Cortez was once dreaded near the sea-coasts of Bengal, and the ships of this province were constantly in fear of being seized by the Portuguese pirates who were known in Bengal as 'Harmads.' This word is a corruption of the Portuguese word for a fleet—'Armada.' The influence which Portuguese once so greatly exercised upon our dialect is now to be traced to a few words only, still current in Bengali such as জানালা, বোতাম, বাল্‌তি, গির্জা, কাকাতুয়া, কপি, ফিতা, ফন্না, পেরেক, আয়া, আলকাতরা, জোলাপ, বরগা, and রেস্তু।

Mr. Halhed in the preface to his grammar published in 1778, says, "At present those persons are thought to speak the compound idiom (Bengali) with the most elegance who mix with the pure Indian verbs, the greatest number of Persian and Arabic nouns."

The importation of foreign words into our vocabulary which the above extracts signify does not, however, indicate any permanent acquisition to our language, as this was caused by the ever-shifting political and social conditions to which the country has been subjected for several centuries.

The number of Portuguese words once current in our dialect has much decreased in course of time and Arabic and Persian words are also on the wane. These words are like season-flies of

our political atmosphere. At one time they swarm in large numbers—thick as leaves on Vallombrosa and after the season is over, vanish away, leaving a mere trace.

But all that has been written above refers only to spoken dialect with which we are not concerned. Our subject is ‘The development of the prose style,’ so it is with the various aspects of the literary use of our language that we shall presently deal.

There have been many absurd opinions current amongst even some of the highly educated members of our community. Some of them hold that Rājā Rāmmohan Ray started the Bengali prose. Others say that it was ‘Alaler Gharer Dulāl’ which first showed the

Prose of an earlier
epoch.

example of writing in the colloquial style. Not to speak of others, Bankim Chandra, the prince of our literati, seemed to favour the current belief, when he remarked in the introduction to Tek Chand Thakur’s work in 1892 “It is generally believed that Bengali prose owed its origin to Rājā Rāmmohan Ray.”

Recent researches have made it clear that Bengali prose was extant even in the tenth century A. D. Though the language of the Sunyapurān has been much tampered with and modernised, yet undoubtedly there are some prose passages in the book at least, which savour

of the style of a very distant epoch of our literature. In the fourteenth century Chandidas wrote a short treatise in prose expounding the truths of the Sahajia-cult in a language which has been recently termed by some scholars Sandhyā Bhāsā. In this treatise we constantly meet with the word “নাড়ি.” We have not been able to make out what the word implies, but we have come across several old Bengali manuscripts in the library of the Calcutta University in which the word “নাড়ি” occurs very frequently. These books belong to the Sahajia-cult. Besides these there are many theological treatises in prose, a list of which is given in my “History of Bengali language and literature.” In jurisprudence one Radha Ballabha Sarma translated some Sanskrit works into simple Bengali prose, and there are others who followed his foot-prints and compiled translations of the works in this branch of culture towards the end of the eighteenth century. We have found a very old translation of the ‘Bhasa Parichhed’ into Bengali prose written about this time. The simple language of this book offers a great contrast to the pedantic style adopted by the late Pandit Rājendrachandra Sastri, Rai Bahadur, who also translated the work into Bengali in quite recent times.

This brief notice will shew that Bengali prose was not altogether a novel phenomenon

in the field of our literature before the advent of the English. It must, however, be admitted that prose was not the general

Illustrations.

medium in those days. The development of Bengali prose is certainly due to the English. They not only stimulated our intellectual awakening in the various departments of knowledge but were themselves the pioneers in the field of Bengali prose, writing many instructive treatises on a variety of subjects in our language.

In order to shew that it was neither Tekchānd Thākur nor Rājā Rāmmohan Rāy who originally set forth the models adopted in their works, but that they followed the foot-prints of the previous writers, we shall here take the liberty of making a few extracts from some of the Bengali works that had existed before 1815, when Rājā Rāmmohan Rāy wrote his first book "Brahma Tattva" in Bengali.

The following is taken from a Bengali prose work called the "জ্ঞানাদি সাধনা।" The MS. of this work in the library of the Calcutta University is dated 1158 B.S. or 1750 A.D. It gives an exposition of the Sahajia-doctrine which seems to be in open revolt with Hinduism and curiously even with Vaisnabism though the author outwardly professes the latter religion. The date of the composition of the work may be half a century

Jnānādi Sādhana.

earlier than that of the copy preserved in the University of Calcutta. So the work was probably written about 1700 A.D.

“ আরবার সাধু জিজ্ঞাসেন যে জন মাতার গৰ্ভ হইতে জন্মিয়া কনে শুনে না ঐজন পঁচিশ বৎসর বড় হইয়াছে কোন কালেহ কৰ্ণে শুনে না সেই জনে কোন দিন ক খ গ ঘ ঙ ইত্যাদি পঠন করিতে পারে কিনা এবং সেই জনে পিতা মাতা করিয়া ডাকিতে পারে কিনা তাহা কহ আর জিজ্ঞাসি জন্ম-অন্ধজনে নবীন নীরদবর্ণ শ্রীকৃষ্ণের রূপ চিন্তা করিতে পারে কিনা তাহা কহ । অজ্ঞানী জীবে কহেন যেজন মাতার গৰ্ভ হইতে জন্মিয়া কখন ঐ মনুষ্যাদির শ্রবণ করে নাই সে ক খ আদি অক্ষর পাঠ করিতে পারে না এবং পিতামাতা আদির নাম করিয়া ডাকিতে পারেনা এবং জন্ম-অন্ধ জনেহ কখন নবীন মেঘো দেখে নাই যে সেই পরমেশ্বর শ্রীকৃষ্ণের নবীন মেঘ নীলবর্ণ ভাবিতে পারে না । সাধু জিজ্ঞাসেন কনাদি পঞ্চজ্ঞান ইন্দ্রিয় বিনে জন্ম-বধিরে কেন মনে মনে ক খ আদি পাঠ করেনা এবং মাতা পিতাদির নাম করিয়া ডাকে না এবং জন্ম অন্ধ জনে মনে মনে নবীন নীল মেঘ কেন চিন্তা করে না তাহা কহ । অজ্ঞানী জীবে কহে জন্মাবধি অজ্ঞাতা জনে কুন দিন ক খ অক্ষর পাঠ করিতে পারে না এবং জন্মাবধি অশ্রোত জনে কখনহ পিতা মাতাদির নাম শুনে নাই সে কিপ্রকার পিতা মাতাদির নাম করিয়া ডাকিব । এখন সত্য বুঝিলাম জন্মাবধি অশ্রোতা জন মনে মনে পিতা মাতাদির নাম করিয়া ডাকিতে পারে না এবং জন্ম-অন্ধ জনেহ কুন দিন নবীন নীল মেঘের বর্ণ দেখে নহে সে কিপ্রকার মনে মনে নবীন নীল মেঘের বর্ণ চিন্তা করিব এখন সত্য বুঝিলাম জন্ম-অন্ধ জনে কখন নবীন নীলমেঘের মনে মনে চিন্তা করিতে পারে না । সাধু জিজ্ঞাসেন তাহা তুমি কিপ্রকারে কহিয়াছিল। কনাদি পঞ্চজ্ঞান ইন্দ্রিয়ে বিনেহ কেবল মনে মনে পরমেশ্বর শ্রীকৃষ্ণাদিকে জ্ঞান করা যাএ । যদি জন্ম অবধি অশ্রোতা জনে ক খ আদি অক্ষর পাঠ করিতে পারে না ও পিতা মাতা বন্ধু বান্ধবদিগের নাম করিয়া ডাকিতে পারে না এবং জন্ম অন্ধ জনেহ মনে মনে নবীন নীল বর্ণ চিন্তা করিতে পারে না । অতএব

অজ্ঞানী জনেহ পরমেশ্বর শ্রীকৃষ্ণকে জ্ঞান করিতে পারে না এখন তুমি সত্য করিয়া কহ তুমার ঠাঞি শ্রীকৃষ্ণ সত্য কি মিথ্যা। অজ্ঞানী জীবে কহেন আমি অজ্ঞানী কখন ঐ পরমেশ্বর শ্রীকৃষ্ণের মুখের শব্দ আমার কর্ণে শুনি নাই এবং আমার চক্ষুতেহ তাহার স্পর্শ পাই নাই এবং আমার চক্ষেতেহ তাহান শরীরে রূপ দেখি নাই এবং আমার জিহ্বাতেহ তাহান প্রসাদের রস পাই নাই এবং আমার নাসিকাতেহ তাহান শরীরে গন্ধ পাই নাই অতএব এখন সত্য বুঝিলাম আমি অজ্ঞানী আমার ঠাঞি পরমেশ্বর শ্রীকৃষ্ণ মিথ্যা।

সাধু জিজ্ঞাসেন তুমি পূর্বে শুনিয়াছিলায় পরমেশ্বরের মুখ হৈতে বেদাদি শাস্ত্র জন্মিয়াছে এবং সেই বেদাদি শাস্ত্র ধর্ম্য ও অধর্ম্য কহিয়াছে সেই বেদাদি শাস্ত্র কি মিথ্যা সত্য কহ। অজ্ঞানী জীবে কহেন যখন আমার ঠাঞি পরমেশ্বর শ্রীকৃষ্ণ মিথ্যা হইয়াছেন এখন বুঝিলাম ঐ বেদাদি শাস্ত্র মিথ্যা হইয়াছে এবং ঐ শাস্ত্রেতেই লিখিয়াছেন যে ব্রাহ্মণাদির ধর্ম্যহ মিথ্যা এবং পিতৃ মাতৃ আদিহ মিথ্যা এবং আমিহ মিথ্যা এবং আমার কথাহ মিথ্যা। এখন আপনার শ্রীমুখের কথা শুনিয়া আপনার শ্রীচরণের নিকট আমি নিঃশব্দ হইলাম। সাধু জিজ্ঞাসেন এই সংসারের লোক কেমন হৈলে নিঃশব্দ হয় তাহা কহ। অজ্ঞানী জীবে কহে ঐ সংসারের লোক মরিলে নিঃশব্দ হয়। সাধু জিজ্ঞাসেন তুমিহ এখন বাঁচিয়াছ কি মরিয়াছ তাহা কহ। অজ্ঞানী জীবে কহেন আমি পঞ্চজ্ঞান ইন্দ্রিয়ের দ্বারা এ শ্রীকৃষ্ণকে জ্ঞান না করিতে পারিয়া মরিয়াছি। সাধু কহেন এখন তোমার অজ্ঞান-জন্মের মরণ হৈল এবং অজ্ঞান-জন্মের শাস্ত্রাদিহ বিস্মৃতি হৈল।”

(Typical Selections from Old Bengali Literature, Volume II, pp. 1635-1636.)

[“The Sadhu—‘If a child after coming to this earth from his mother’s womb has never heard a sound owing to his deafness, can he read the letters *ka*, *kha*, *gha*, etc., when he is

in his 25th year? Or can he call his father and mother by the usual terms 'papa' and 'mamma'? I also want to know from you whether a man who is born blind can contemplate the dark blue colour ascribed to Krisna, which, as they say, is like that of the newly formed cloud.

"The inquirer—'The man who is born deaf and has never heard *ka, kha, ga, gha*, etc., as we have, cannot call his parents 'papa' and 'mamma' as we do? Nor can one who has never seen any object of dark-blue colour like that of a newly-formed cloud, contemplate the dark-blue colour attributed to Krisna.'

"The Sadhu—'How then did you say that without the help of the senses one could realize Kṛiṣṇa, the god of the universe? A man born deaf cannot read the alphabet nor call his parents and friends by the terms by which they are called, and a man born blind cannot contemplate the dark-blue colour of Kṛiṣṇa like that of a newformed cloud. So one who has not a true knowledge of the Deity within oneself can not realize God by one's mind alone which is the receptacle of the impressions produced by the five senses. Now tell me whether you do possess a knowledge of God or not?'

"The enquirer—'I am without any knowledge of God. I never heard God speak to me, nor ever felt His touch on my person, nor did I touch the food partaken first by Him. My

nose never smelt the sweet scent emanating from His person. And now I understand that the existence of Kriṣṇa is unreal to me.'

"The Sadhu—' You had formerly heard that the Vedas originated from the mouth of God and that in them is written what is good and what is evil. Tell me if you consider the Vedas to be true.'

"The enquirer—' As Kriṣṇa, the god of the universe, is now unreal to me, the Vedas which are said to have emanated from him are necessarily unreal, so are the definitions of vice and virtue given in them. It is written in the Shāstras of the Brāhmans themselves that vice and virtue are all unreal and so are father, mother and one's own self, and all that one says and does. Now I should be silent and speak no more. I only want to hear what your Holiness will be pleased to say.'

"The Sadhu—' Tell me when does a man become silent for ever in this world? '

"The enquirer—' When a man dies he become silent for ever.'

"The Sadhu—' As you profess yourself to be silent, tell me whether you are living or dead? '

"The enquirer—' I have not been able to realise God by my five senses, so you may take me for dead.'

"The Sadhu—' Now the life of your ignorance is dead, and now forget for ever those false

doctrines which you read in your false Shāstras. You will now be a new born man with the true knowledge that I am going to give you.’”]

The above will not compare unfavourably with the style of the theological works of Rājā Rāmmohan Rāy, written at least a hundred years later.

Next we give a passage from the translation of ‘Hitopodesa’ by Pandit Golak Nāth Sarmā published in 1801 from the Srirampur press (pp. 152-153).

Golak Sarmā’s Hitopodesa.

“হস্তিনাপুরেতে বিলাস নামে এক রজক আছে তাহার গর্দভ অনেক বহিয়া অত্যন্ত দুর্বল মরিবার ছায় হইয়াছে। তাহার পর সে রজক ব্যাঘ্রের চর্ম্ম লইয়া তাহাকে আচ্ছাদন করিল তাহা করিলে অরণ্যের নিকট শস্ত্রতে ছাড়িয়া দিল। তাহার পর সকল ক্ষেত্রপতিরা তাহাকে ব্যাঘ্র জ্ঞান করিয়া পলায়ন করে। তার পর একদিন কোন ক্ষেত্র রক্ষক এক কঞ্চল গায় জড়াইয়া ধনুর্ঝান সজ্জা করিয়া আছে তার পর গর্দভ শস্ত্র খাইয়া হৃষ্ট পুষ্ট হইয়াছে অতএব উহাকে গর্দভী জ্ঞান করিয়া ওঃ শব্দ করিলেক। সে শুনিয়া বলিল যে এ গর্দভের শব্দ এই নিশ্চয় হইলে তীরে হনন করিল।

[There lived a washerman named Bilās in the city of Hastināpur. His ass became aged and infirm after having carried the loads of his master for long years. The master of the ass covered it with a tiger’s skin and let it loose in the corn-fields near the forest. The ploughmen took it for a tiger and fled away. It so happened one day that one of the cultivators

covered his body with a blanket and with a bow in hand guarded his field. The ass having satisfied its hunger fully by eating the corn mistook the man with the blanket for a she-ass and brayed aloud in a spirit of joy crying ‘Oh.’ The man was at once convinced that it was the braying of an ass and aimed his arrow at the animal. The ass was thus forthwith killed.]

But the language of the colloquies of Dr.

Carey published in 1801 and

Dr. Carey’s Itihāsa-
mālā.

that of the prose portion of

Kāminī Kumār written towards

the end of the eighteenth century, by Gauri Kānta Dās are even perhaps better specimens of the Bengali colloquial style of the period. Gauri Kānta Dās was a Vaidya and was a native of Sutanati, Calcutta. In his Kāminī Kumār he subscribes himself as Kālī Kṛṣṇa Dās which was his *nom de plume*. My readers will find large quotations from Dr. Carey’s colloquies in my “Typical Selections from Old Bengali Literature, Vol. II” and in my “History of Bengali Language and Literature.” The following extract is taken from his “Itihāsa-mālā” or “Garland of Stories” written eleven years later in 1812.

“ধনপতি নামে এক সওদাগর লহনা নামে তাহার স্ত্রী সে লহনাকে বিবাহ করিলে অনেক দিবস সন্তান জন্মিল না অতএব তাহাকে বক্ষ্য জ্ঞান করিয়া সওদাগর পুণরায় লক্ষপতি সওদাগরের কন্যা খুলনা নামে জগন্মোহিনী পরম সুন্দরীকে বিবাহ করিয়া আপন গৃহে আনিল। ধনপতি

কিছুদিনের পরে বাণিজ্যে গেলে সে সওদাগরের ঘরে দোবলা নামে এক দাসী থাকে সে দাসী লহনাকে কহিল তুমি এখন যৌবনহীনা ও বয়সিকা খুল্লনা পরম সুন্দরী তাহার রূপ লাভণ্যে সওদাগর বশ হইবে তোমাকে চাহিবে না অতএব খুল্লনাকে অন্নকষ্ট দাও তাহার যৌবন নষ্ট কর। লহনা দোবলার কথা শুনিয়া মনে বুঝিল যে দোবলা ভাল বলিয়াছে। পরে লহনা ধনপতি সওদাগরের জবানী কপট পত্র রচনা করিল সে পত্রে এই লহনাকে লিখিল আমি যে কন্যা বিবাহ করিয়াছি সে রাক্ষসী তাহাকে বিবাহ করিয়া বড় কষ্ট পাইলাম অতএব দিবা তারে অন্নকষ্ট, করিবা যৌবন নষ্ট রাখাইবা তাহারে ছাগল। এই পত্র শুনিয়া খুল্লনা জ্বলিয়া গেল। দুই সতীনে গালা গালি মুখোমুখি তার পর ধরাধরি চুলাচুলি তারপর কিলাকিলি হইলে বলেতে লহনা খুল্লনার সকল অলঙ্কার ও উত্তম বস্ত্রাদি কাড়িয়া লইয়া তাহাকে চিড়া কানি পরাইয়া ছাগল রক্ষনে নিযুক্ত করিল” ইতি (Story No. 112, pp. 241-242).

[There was a merchant named Dhanapati whose wife was Lahana. During their long matrimonial life they had no issue, so the merchant married a second time another very beautiful damsel named Khullanā, a daughter of the merchant Lakshapati, and brought her to his house. Dhanapati went abroad for trade, and during his absence Dobalā, the maid-servant of the house told her mistress, Lahana : “ You are now grown old and your beauty has faded, Khullanā on the other hand is very beautiful, and it is but natural that the merchant will be soon enamoured of her and will be absolutely under her control, he will not even care to look at you. So if you will be well advised, give Khullanā half meal so that her youthful beauty

may be destroyed. Lahanā considered her advice to be sound and forthwith wrote a letter as if her husband Dhanapati had addressed it to her. The purport of the letter ran thus :—

“The girl that I have married is a witch. I have been put to infinite trouble since this marriage. So henceforward give her half food destroy her youth and send her to tend the goats in the fields.” As soon as this letter was read out to Khullanā she flew into a great rage. The two co-wives began a fierce quarrel in which first they abused each other and then had a regular hand-to-hand fight in which one pulled the other by the hair and both scratched and slapped and kicked at each other, till by sheer physical force Lahanā took away all the ornaments from Khullanā’s body and sent her to the fields to tend the goats.]

Here is an extract from Kāminī Kumār :—

“সে যাহা হইক আজি হইতে কৰ্ত্তা তুমি আমার ধৰ্ম বাপ হইলে, যখন যে আজ্ঞা করিবেন এই ভৃত্য কৃতসাধ্য প্রাণপণে পালন করিব। কামিনী কহিলেক, ওহে চোর তুমি আমার আর কি কৰ্ম্য করিবেক, কেবল ছকার কৰ্ম্মে সৰ্ব্বদা নিযুক্ত থাকহ, আর এক কথা তোমাকে চোর চোর বলিয়া সৰ্ব্বদা বা কাঁহাতক ডাকি, আজি হইতে আমি তোমার নাম রামবল্লভ রাখিলাম। সদাগর কহিলেক ‘যে আজ্ঞা মহাশয়।’ এইরূপ কথোপকথনান্তে ক্ষণেক বিলম্বে কামিনী কহিলেক ‘ওহে রামবল্লভ একবার তামাক সাজ দেখি।’ রামবল্লভ ‘যে আজ্ঞে’ বলিয়া তৎক্ষণাৎ তামাক সাজিয়া আলবোলা আনিয়া ধরিয়া দিলেক। এই প্রকার রামবল্লভ তামাক সাজা কৰ্ম্মে নিযুক্ত হইলে পরে ক্রমে ক্রমে তামাক

সাজিতে রামবল্লভের তামাক সাজার এমত অভ্যাস হইল যে রামবল্লভ
 যত্নপি ভোজনে কিংবা শয়ান আছেন ও সেই সময়ে যদি কামিনী বলে—
 “ওহে রামবল্লভ কোথায় গেলেহে”—রামবল্লভের উত্তর “আজ্ঞে তামাক
 সাজিতেছি।” কালীকৃষ্ণ দাস বলে, পশ্চাৎ রামবল্লভের এমনি কন্ত
 হইল যে, কামিনীকে আর স্পষ্ট রামবল্লভ বলিতে হয় না, “রাম”
 বলিবামাত্রই রামবল্লভ তামাক সাজাইয়া মজুত।”

[Now, by God, I say you are my god-father, I accept you as my master. Whatever orders you may be graciously pleased to pass, it will be my duty as an humble servant to execute to the best of my power, and even at the risk of my life. Kamini said, “What work will you do here? There is not much to be done; I would simply place you in charge of my *hukā* for the present. One word more, how long shall I address you as ‘thief’? I give you a name; I shall henceforth call you Rāmvalabbh. The merchant said “So be it, Sir.” After such conversation Kāminī said “Now my Rāmvalabbha, do kindly prepare a *silim* of tobacco for me.” Ramvalabbh immediately prepared a *silim* and bringing the *hukā*, held the pipe before Kāminī. Rāmvalabbh being appointed to the work soon became an expert in the art, and it became the subject of his constant thought, so much so that if Kāminī called him while dining or while asleep, saying “Where have you gone, my Ramvalabbh?” he would immediately answer, “Sir, I am preparing tobacco.” Kālī Kṛṣṇa Dās (author of the poem

Kāminī Kumār) says that Rāmvalabh in course of time became so clever and practised a hand in the art of preparing tobacco, that he would not wait till his full name was pronounced. As soon as “ Ram ” came out of Kāminī’s lips, Rāmvalabh was ready with tobacco.]*

Rājiblochana’s Kṛṣṇa Chandra Charita.

There are several historical treatises written about the beginning of the nineteenth century, the language of which is clear and distinctly free from all Sanskritic or Persian influence. Chief amongst these is a biography of Rājā Kṛṣṇa Chandra by Rājib Lochan published in London in 1805. Here is a specimen of his style :—

(1) “ পরে নবাব আজেদৌল্লা পলায়ন করিয়া যান। তিন দিবস অভুক্ত অত্যন্ত ক্ষুধিত নদী তটের নিকট এক ফকিরের আলয় দেখিয়া নবাব কর্ণধারকে কহিলেন এই ফকিরের স্থানে গিয়া তুমি ফকিরকে বল কিঞ্চিৎ খাদ্য সামগ্রী দাও একজন মনুষ্য পীড়িত কিঞ্চিৎ আহার করিবেক।

* Some scholars have held that Kāminī Kumār is a much later production and was published first in 1837 A. D. This is quite wrong. One of the later editions which they happened to come across might have been of that date. I had a much earlier edition of the book, which was taken from me by the late Mr. H. Bose, the Perfumer, and never returned. Babu Ramanath Sen, Inspector of Police, made a fair copy of Kāminī Kumār in 1224 B.S. (or 1817 A.D.) from the village of Suapur, District Dacca. The book was burnt in 1894 as the house in which it was kept caught fire. The reputation of Kāminī Kumār must have taken some years to travel from Calcutta to a distant village in the Dacca District in those days. From all these circumstances it is proved without doubt that Kāminī Kumār first saw the light before 1810 at the latest,

ফকির ঐ বাকা শ্রবণ করিয়া নৌকার নিকট আসিয়া দেখিল অল্পস্থ নবাব আজ্জেরদৌল্লা বিষণ্ণ বদন। ফকির সকল বৃত্তান্ত জ্ঞাত হইয়া বিবেচনা করিল নবাব পলায়ন করিয়া যায় ইহাকে আমি ধরিয়া দিব। আমাকে পূর্বে যথেষ্ট নিগ্রহ করিয়াছিল তাহার শোধ লইব। ইহাই মনমধ্যে করিয়া করপুটে বলিল আহারের দ্রব্য আমি প্রস্তুত করি আপনারা সকলে ভোজন করিয়া প্রস্থান করুন। ফকিরের প্রিয় বাক্যে নবাব অত্যন্ত তুষ্ট হইয়া ফকিরের বাড়ীতে গমন করিলেন। ফকির খাণ্ড সামগ্রী আগ্রহজন করিতে লাগিল এবং নিকটে নবাব মীরজাফরালিখানের চাকর ছিল তাহাকে সম্বাদ দিল যে নবাব আজ্জেরদৌল্লা পলায়ন করিয়া যান তোমরা তাহাকে ধর। নবাব মীরজাফরালিখানের লোক এ সম্বাদ পাবামাত্র অনেক মনুষ্য একত্র হইয়া আজ্জেরদৌল্লাকে ধরিয়া মুরশিদাবাদে আনিলেক।”

(২) যাবদীয় নগরস্থ লোকদিগের সন্তোষের সীমা নাই। কিঞ্চিৎ কাল পরে পাত্রের প্রতি রাজা আজ্জা করিলেন যাবতীয় নগরের লোকের বাড়ীতে মংস্ত্র ও দধি এবং সন্দেশ ভাঁড়ে ভাঁড়ে প্রদান কর। পাত্র রাজাজ্ঞানুসারে সকলের বাড়ীতে প্রদান করিয়া পশ্চাৎ রাজার নিকট গমন করিয়া নিবেদন করিলেন মহারাজ অন্তঃপুরে যাইয়া পুত্র দর্শন করুন এবং ভৃত্যদিগেরও বাসনা রাজপুত্র দেখে।

[“After his defeat the Nawāb in the course of his flight became oppressed with hunger; for three days he had no meal and when on the fourth day his boat was passing by the abode of a fakir, he ordered a man to go to him and tell him that a certain man was very ill and that he wanted to be served with some food at his place. The fakir hearing this came near the boat, and recognised the Nawāb, who looked extremely pale. He thought “once

upon a time the Nawāb oppressed me and now the time for retaliation has come. I shall bring him up to Mirzafar." But with joined palms he said "I am arranging the dinner quickly, so that you may continue your journey as soon as possible after partaking of it." The Nawāb was highly pleased with the courteous reception thus given him by the fakir, and went to his house in great confidence. The fakir began to make arrangement for the meal but in the meantime he had sent a secret message to an officer of Mirzafar reporting that the Nawāb was fleeing and that he should lose no time in seizing him. As soon as the officer got this information, he hastened to the fakir's abode with a body of men, seized the Nawāb and sent him to Murshidābād.]"

(2) [All the citizens were highly delighted. Some time after the Raja told his minister "Send sweets and curd to the houses of all citizens in baskets." The minister did as he was ordered and then waited on the Raja and said "Go, Sir, to the inner apartments and see your new-born son, the officers and servants of the palace are also eagerly wishing to see the prince.]

(*Krisnachandra Charita*).

The most popular Bengali book during 1823-

1855 was the "Navabābubilās"

Nava Babu Bilas,
the most popular Ben-
gali book of the time.

by Pramāthānāth Sarmā. In
the year 1855, the Rev. J. Long

wrote of this book "as one of the ablest satires on

the Calcutta Babu." He compares the book with Hogarth's Rake's Prayers. A long review of this book appeared in the Quarterly Friend of India in the year 1826. And we learn from the Rev. J. Long's account that there were many editions of the book constantly issuing from the Press from year to year, and that the whole of Calcutta was astir with its praise at the time. Pramathanath wrote another book on the same lines in which he depicted the vices of the young women of Bengal as he had exposed those of the young Babu in his 'Navabābubilās' and the former was no less severe than the latter. It is interesting to note here, though it will be a little digression, that only a few years after the time when the Rev. J. Long had eulogised this book as the most popular work of the day, Peary Chand Mitra wrote his 'Ālaler Gharer Dulāl' which cast into shade the 'Nava Bābu Bilās' so effectively that even its name was forgotten in a short time.

Nava Babu Vilas
and Ālaler Gharer
Dulal.

Yet if one reads the two works together, the conclusion will be inevitable that the one is the original and the other its copy. 'Ālaler Gharer Dulāl' is an elaboration of the tale already told in 'Nava Bābu Bilās' with a change in the names of its characters. The former work is more verbose, sketched with a lighter touch and though improving upon the humour of the original in some passages shows the

author's effort to pose as a humorist with a consciousness of his art ever present in his mind, —thus offering a contrast to the earlier work, of which brevity is the soul of wit, and which is epigrammatic—always to the point and full of direct home-thrusts. We can well understand why our people preferred the copy to its original. Peary Chand Mitra was a scholar, well-versed in English and some other European languages and was the leader of the young educated community at the time. His style of writing was to a certain extent an imitation of that of descriptive English romances which very often revel in minor details. For this or some other reason, best known to them, the people forgot Pramatha Sarma, one of the greatest wits amongst our litterateurs and welcomed a glib-tongued plagiarist, who won his laurels by his good-humoured perspecuity of style, scholarship and verbosity. So the fountain-head of the Bengali colloquial style has now passed into oblivion and “Ālaler Gharer Dulāl” monopolises all the fame. We can very well excuse Oswell, Philips, and P. G. Cowell for their high-flown eulogium of the work which they mistook for an original production. Some of these scholars compared Peary Chand to Moliere and others to Fielding or Dickens. But how can we explain and excuse the fact that even Bankim Chandra called Peary Chand's work an original production and praised him as

a pioneer of the colloquial style in Bengali prose? Peary Chand himself in his English preface to the work, says that his was an original production. This declaration, it must be said for the sake of fairness, is not true.

Of course the humour in the earlier work is somewhat coarse and archaic, but in spite of it, it is high time that the works of Pramatha Sarma should be published under the auspices of the Calcutta University, or some other learned body of this province. The 'Nava Bibi Bilās' is now almost extinct. The only copy that survives like the Dodo in Madagascar is the one preserved in the library of Munshi Abdul Karim of Chittagong, so far as we know. We give an extract from the 'Naba Bābu Bilās' below.

অথ মুন্সী বৃত্তান্ত

ধরের পো বহু অন্বেষণ করিয়া যশোহর নিবাসী এক মুন্সী সমভিব্যাহারে লইয়া আগমন করিলেন। কর্তা কহেন শুন মুন্সী আমার সন্তানদিগকে পারসী পড়াইবা এবং বহির্দ্বারে যে দিবস বাবুরা কোন স্থানে নিমন্ত্রণে যানাকৃত হইয়া গমন করিবেন সঙ্গে যাইবা মাগ খোরাকি তিন তক্কা পাইবা। ইহা শুনিয়া যশোহর নিবাসী মুন্সী প্রস্থান করিল। তৎপর নাটর ফরিদপুর ঢাকা ছিলহট্ট কমিল্লা বড়ন বরিশাল ইত্যাদি দেশী মুন্সী প্রায় মাসেক দুই মাস গমনাগমন করিলেন কর্তা তাহার দিগর জবাব দিলেন কলিলেন তোমাদিগের জবান দোব্রুস্ত নহে অর্থাৎ বাক্ পরিস্কার নহে। কর্তাটির কাছে কি কেহ পারসী কথা বা হিন্দিকথা কহিয়া খোস নাম পাইতে পারেন তিনি অনর্গল পারসী ও হিন্দি কহিতে পারেন। অনন্তর চট্টগ্রাম নিবাসী অপূর্ব মিষ্টভাষী এক উপযুক্ত মুন্সী রাখা হইল। তিনি বোট আপিসের মাজি ছিলেন এক

সার্টিফিকেট দেখাইলেন। কর্তার যেরূপ বিজ্ঞা তাহা পূর্বে লিখিয়াছি তাহাতেই সুবিদিত আছেন কর্তামহাশয় ঐ ইংরাজী লিখিত সার্টিফিকেট পাঠ করিয়া বলিলেন যে অনেক দিবসাবধি এ ব্যক্তি মুন্সীগরি কৰ্ম্ম করিয়াছে তাহাতে লেখা আছে এ প্রযুক্ত আমার কৰ্ম্ম হইতে ছাড়াইল। কর্তা জিজ্ঞাসা করিলেন তুমি কতকাল এ সাহেবের নিকট চাকর ছিলে। মুন্সী কহেন উহাতে লেখা আছে আপনি দেখিবার চান ত দেখুন। কর্তা কহিলেন হাঁ হাঁ আছে বটে কোন সাহেবের কৰ্ম্ম করিতে। আজ্ঞা করতা বালবর কোম্পানি। কোম্পানির মুন্সী গুনিয়া মহা সন্তুষ্ট হইলেন। পরে মাজি পূৰ্বে লিখিত বেতনে সেই সকল কৰ্ম্ম স্বীকার করিলেন। পরদিবস বাবুদিগের পাঠ আরম্ভ হইল অতি সুস্ম বুদ্ধি প্রযুক্ত দুই বৎসরের মধ্যেই প্রায় করিমা সমাপ্তি করিলেন। গোলেতা বস্তা আরম্ভ করিয়া ইংরাজী পড়িবার নিমিত্ত বাবুরা স্বয়ং চেষ্টক হইলেন। বয়ঃক্রম প্রায় তের চৌদ্দ বৎসর হইয়াছে ইংরাজী কাহার নিকট পড়িবেন ইহার চেষ্টায় কখন আরাতুন, পিতকুন, ডিকরুস কালস্ ইত্যাদি সাহেবের ইস্কুলে গমনাগমন করেন কিন্তু বাবুদিগের কেহ ভাল মতে বুঝাইতে পারে না। ইহা গুনিয়া কর্তা কহিলেক তবে একজন সাহেব লোক বাড়ীতে চাকর রাখিতে হয়। পরে ধরের পো অঘেষণে চলিলেন।”

AN ACCOUNT OF THE MUNSHI.

Dharer po, (lit. son of Dhar) the officer, after a good deal of search found a Munshi of Jessore and presented him to our Babu. The Babu said “Look here Munshi, you are to instruct my sons in Persian and when they will have to go out in the carriage to attend some party by invitation, you will have to accompany them. You will have free boarding and Rs. 3 besides, as pay. The Munshi, as he heard the conditions of the offer, departed from

the place. Then for a period of one or two months Munshis hailing from Natore, Dacca, Sylhet, Comilla, Boran and Barisal came as applicants but the Babu dismissed all of them with the remark that their pronunciation was not correct. The Babu could speak Persian and Hindi with fluency,—it was no easy task on the part of the Munshis to please him with their pronunciation. After a time a Munshi of Chittagong was appointed. The man had the wonderful power of pleasing all by his sweet words. He showed a certificate from an officer of the dock in which it was stated that he had served as a boatman. We have already described the Babu's knowledge of English; he cast a glance at the certificate written in English and said "Yes, it is written here that this man acted as a teacher of Persian for a long time." He looked at the Munshi and asked "How long did you serve this European officer?" The Munshi said "Sir, see it yourself, it is written in the certificate." The Babu said "Oh yes, Oh yes, it is there; in what office did you serve?" "It is Balabor Company, your honour,"; was the reply. The Babu was greatly delighted that the Munshi had served an English company. The boat-man agreed to the conditions of the Babu and was forthwith employed. The young sons began to be instructed in Persian from the next day and as they possessed uncommon

intelligence, they were reported! to have mastered *Karima* and other lessons in less than two years. When they began *Golestha*, the young boys themselves wished to be taught English. They were now fairly grown up lads and they paid visits to the schools set up by Aratun, Peedroos, D'Cruz, Callos and others; but none of them was found efficient enough to teach them. When the Babu heard this, he said "No, this will not do, we shall have to employ a European teacher at our house. Dharer po, the officer, started in quest of one.]

Side by side with the above, I recommend you to read the following passage from the "Probodh Chandrika" by Pundit Mrityunjaya Sarma written in 1813.

Probodh Chandrika.

“স্বা কহিল গুড় হইলেই কি রাঁধা হয়? তৈল নাই লুন নাই চাউল নাই তরকারী পাতি কিছুই নাই। কাঠগুলি সকলি ভিজা বেসাতি বা কিকুপে হবে * * * কুটনা বা কে কুটিবে বাটনা বা কে বাটিবে? তৎপতি কহিল আগ্র কি যবে কিছুই নাই দেখ দেখি খুঁদ কুড়া যদি কিছু থাকে তবে তার পিঠে কর এই গুড় দিয়া খাইব। ইহাতে স্বা বলিল বটে পিঠা করা বুঝি বড় সহজ? জান না পিঠা আঠা যেমন আঠা লাগিলে শীঘ্র ছাড়ে না তেমনি পিঠার লেঠা শীঘ্র ছাড়ে না ॥ কখনো ত রাঁধিয়া খাও নাই। আর লোকদের মতন মাউগ পাইয়া থাকিতে তবে জানিতে।” (*History of the Bengali Language and Literature*, p. 921.)

[“The mistress of the house said ‘Is treacle the only thing required for cooking? There

is no oil, no salt, no rice, no vegetable of any kind: the fuel is wet. What about the spices? My son's wife is not well and cannot work. Who will grind the spices and prepare the vegetables?' Her lord said, "Look closely; is nothing available in the house? See, woman, if you can find out some refuse rice and make cakes with it. We shall take them with treacle." The mistress said "Indeed, is the preparation of cakes so simple then? They say that the making of cakes is like putting gum in the hands, if once it sticks, it takes a good deal of time to clean it off. Cake-preparation takes much time and is full of trouble. You never cooked any thing in your life, husband, therefore you speak so foolishly. Had you had an ordinary woman for your wife, you would by this time, no doubt, have had bitter experience."] (*History of Bengali Language and Literature*, 1880.)

All this will give a fair idea of the origin of the style followed not only in *Ālāler Gharer Dulāl* but also *Hutum Pichār Naksā*.

We need not multiply examples of the sort given above. They are too numerous. We do not say that the passages cited above are like modern Bengali prose in every respect. On the other hand there are many archaic forms and unusual expressions which would at once remind the readers that these specimens of prose belong to a different and earlier epoch of our literary

history. For instance, in the first extract the words “তুমার,” “ঠাই,” “তাহান্,” “জিজ্ঞাসেন,” no longer find a place in decent literature, and the letter হ as in “চক্ষ্মেতেহ,” “চক্ষ্মেতেহ,” “জিহ্বাতেহ,” “ধক্ষ্মহ,” “আমিহ,” and “আসিহ,” is evidently an earlier form of the modern “ও.” In the second extract the expression “তাহা করিলে” in modern prose would be “তাহা করিয়া.” The use of the learned word “ক্ষেত্র-পতি” in the place of the simple “রাখাল” or “চাষা” is apparently inapt and heavy. The form “করিলেক” is also now passing away. “হনন করিল” in modern prose will be “হত্যা করিল” though we cannot adduce any rhyme or reason for this change in the phraseology. In the third passage the syntax in “ধনপতি কিছুদিনের পরে বাণিজ্যে গেলে সে সওদাগরের ঘরে দোবলা নামে এক দাসী থাকে” is jargon, nonsensical according to modern rules and no less so is the half-poetic construction in “দিবা তারে অনলকষ্ট করিবা যৌবন নষ্ট রাখাইব তাহারে ছাগল.” In the extract from Kāminī Kumār the words “করিবেক,” “থাকহ,” “কহিলেক,” “দিলেক,” have, as we have already stated, grown quaint and archaic, and the word ‘পষ্ট,’ though colloquially we still use it, is untenable in written literature. The colophon towards the end of this extract is a very curious specimen shewing the mannerism in the prose-writing of those days on the lines of a ভণিতা in poetical composition. Nor is Rājib Lochān less free from archaic forms than the

rest. He also uses “করিবেক,” “আনিলেক,” etc. “ফকির এই বাক্য শ্রবণ করিয়া নৌকার নিকট আসিয়া দেখিল অশ্রুস্থ নবাব স্রাজেদৌল্লা বিষণ্ণ বদন ” sounds like poetry and closes abruptly. In the ‘Bābu Bilās’ the forms ”তাহার দিগর,” “চেফক,” কভা,” are of course no longer used in writing. The word “চেফক” is a corruption of চেষ্টিত. In the passage from Mrityunjay’s Probodh Chandrika, though the colloquial terms are full of humour and to the point, we are yet reminded of the age in which it was written, by the use of such expressions as “মাউগ and তৎপতি.”

Thus we see that the passages quoted are all indelibly stamped with the signs of the age in which they were written but nevertheless it must be stated for the sake of truth that our quota-

tions are all genuine Bengali
The exotic influences.

prose. They are free from all foreign influences which latterly gave an outlandish and grotesque air to our written prose style. Had Bengali continued to be written in the style of the aforesaid works, with modifications and improvements inevitably brought on by the progress of time, its natural growth would have remained unimpaired. But at the stage of which we are speaking, a strange influence came over its spirit thwarting its normal development and leading it through uncouth forms of which we shall presently furnish examples. But these influences,

though they disfigured our prose for the time being, proved wholesome in the end; as it gradually shook off its borrowed feathers acquired from other language and assimilated such foreign elements as could be best adapted to our language. This has latterly quickened its advancement towards its modern forms.

Now in the grip of European sponsors who patronised it, next receiving attention from the over-fastidious Moulavi and then led to the complications of Sanskrit Poetics and its unwieldy lexicon—our language for a quarter of a century lay hopelessly entangled in the figures of foreign rhetoric and their involved syntactical constructions. When this period of transition was over, we find our prose re-asserting itself in a new garb with a fresh vigour which it derived from English and with a new standard of purity which the culture of Sanskrit gave it. Led by the capricious sway of the Moulavi, the Pundit and the English scholar, which acted as a centrifugal force, the course that the Bengali prose took was far from its own natural path of progress. We will presently furnish examples of the grotesque mannerisms, involved syntactical constructions, and lavish rhetorical excesses which our literature presented at this stage of its dependence upon exotic sources. We shall first of all for a little while review the influence of the

Vaisnavas who, for a time had made the Bengali language a medium of their theological expositions.

THE INFLUENCE OF VAISNAVA WRITERS.

The influence of the Vaisnavas, may be traced in a few points, which are rather of a minor importance. But still we take the liberty of referring to them.

- (1) The forms “জীহঁ,” “তিহঁ,” “পঁহু,” were introduced by the Vaisnavas.

The forms

জিঁহ, তিঁহ,
etc.

Some of these are of Hindi and others of a mixed extraction, showing a kindred element to

Brajabulī. These words were common amongst the Vaisnavas even from the time of the “Chaitanya Charitamrita” in the sixteenth century, as for instance “দেহ কান্ত্য তিহঁ হয় সুকৃষ্ণ বরণ” We find the use of জিঁহ, তিঁহ sometimes with and at others without the nasal sign in many of our early prose writings. See ‘Jnanadi Sadhana’ (p. 1630, Typical Selections, Vol. II) and an old document quoted in the same work (p. 1641). But these forms do not seem to have been generally adopted outside the pale of orthodox Vaisnava writers. The forms যিনি, তিনি, are in much more use in non-Vaisnava literature of that age.

() In the phraseology of the Vaisnavas we find all convention, distinguishing animate from inanimate objects, completely upset.

Inanimate objects glorified.

It is a common thing in the Vaisnava prose-works to meet with verbs denoting respect for inanimate objects. In the Jnanadi Sadhana (p. 1631) the word 'দেহ' has for its verb 'আসিলেন.' In the Hitopadesh by Goloknath Pundit (1802 A.D.) we find such lines as "কাঞ্চন সংসর্গেতে কাঁচ যে তিনি বহুমূল্য প্রস্তরের দীপ্তি ধারণ করেন." The form "শাস্ত্র কহেন" has been a very familiar one since the time of Raja Rammohan Roy in whose writings it occurs in abundance. I believe that this form of glorifying inanimate things was first introduced by the Vaisnava theological leaders while giving exposition of the doctrines of their sect.

3. The rather lavish use of the lucky sign 'শ্রী' characterises all Vaisnava writings.

The use of শ্রী.

The Vaisnavas will not only speak of their shrines and holy images with the letter "শ্রী" before them, but many other things of less importance are given the same glory in their books. It seems the use of "শ্রী" in such profusion is restricted to the writings of the orthodox Vaisnavas only, though the use of শ্রী as a lucky sign is perhaps to be traced to a still earlier source. We find পঞ্চ শ্রীযুক্ত (adorned with five *Srees*) used in respect of the Tippera Rajahs from a very early age.

THE INFLUENCE OF PERSIAN AND ARABIC.

Bengali vocabulary was no doubt largely enriched by Persian and Arabic words. The

Language of the
Court and of fashion-
able society.

Muhammadans held the supreme power in this country for long centuries, and it is but natural that Arabic and Persian should gain favour in the court as well as in the fashionable literature of the day.

It is no wonder therefore that the word ধর্ম্মাধিকারী was replaced by the word কাজি, নিশাপতি or নিশানাথ by কোটাল, মহামাত্র and পাত্র by উজির and নাজির. Besides these, hundreds of words come swarming like bees from Persian and Arabic works of jurisprudence and completely freed the literature of administration from the supremacy of Sanskritic words. In our early years it was a common thing to hear words like ঈশ্বরবিষি, ইস্তাহার, কবুলিয়ত, etc., most of which will not be understood by laymen now-a-days. Then in fashionable society the names of all articles of luxury had become, likewise, of Arabic and Persian extraction. ঝাড়, ফানুস, দেয়ালগিরি, এমারত, আসবাব, আতর, became current amongst the people of ordinary ranks. In the country-side where Moslem administration came in touch with the people, the vocabulary changed in favour of Persian and Arabic. There কর or রাজস্ব was supplanted by খাজনা, প্রজা by রায়ত, প্রভু by হজুর,

নমস্কার by সেলাম, সাক্ষাৎ by দরবার, and আবেদন by এভেলা or আর্জি. Judging from the number of words that made aggression upon the dialects of Sanskrit and of Prakrit extraction in the department of administration, the extent of the conquest it must be admitted, was, enormous.

But these could not have a permanent hold upon the vernacular of the province. Within half a century all those spheres, in which

The decadence of the Mahomedan influence.

Persian and Arabic words once reigned supreme, have been cleared of them by the aggression of the English vocabulary.

The remnants of Moslem classical words are everyday being driven from the field of our letters even in the sphere of administration and of fashionable life. The moral is simple. These words were brought by people who conquered by physical force and when others gained that position of authority, the Muhammadan element, as a matter of course, had to yield to the superior power. Anything to have a claim on permanence must have some

Foreign words adding force to our language.

intrinsic merit of its own. Let us see if there was anything in

Persian and Arabic which really supplied a desideratum and was found to be an acquisition to our language. We quote below a letter written by Maharaja Nandakumar to Radhakrisna Ray in August 1756.

“এতএব এখন তুমি কমর বাঁধিয়া আমার উদ্ধার করিতে পার তবেই যে হউক নচেৎ আমার নাম লোপ হইল ইহা মকররর মকররর জানিবা নাগাদি ওরা ভাদ্র তথাকার রোয়দাদ সমেত মজুমদারের লিখনসম্বলিত মনুষ্য কাশেদ এথা পৌছ তাহা করিবা, এ বিষয়ে এক পত্র লক্ষ হইতে অধিক জানিবা ”

We need not wait to comment on the archaic use of ‘লিখন সম্বলিত মনুষ্য.’ What we beg to draw attention to, is the use of a few Moslem words such as মকররর, কশেৎ, রোয়দাদ, etc. It appears without doubt that these words have added strength to the sentences. They are apt and happy expressions and it would be difficult to replace them with the same effect by any Sanskritic words. We, find, however, that though undoubtedly there are many Arabic and Persian

words which give a real strength to our sentences and may be with advantage given a permanent place in our vocabulary, the conservative element so greatly prevails in our country as to shut the gate against all foreign intrusion.

Here is a list of some of the words of Arabic, Persian and Urdu extraction, which are quite familiar in Hindu homes. Yet most of these do not find a place in our decent literature. The poet Alawal shows even a greater zeal than Hindu writers in making the largest import of words of Sanskritic origin. The Brahmanic influence still pervades our literature and there is a tendency to avoid words of a foreign origin in

written literature and to replace them by their Sanskritic equivalents. In the colloquial speech, however, this process is also found to work, though not as palpably as in written compositions. Some of the words given below are extensively used in Eastern Bengal. And though they may not be very familiar to other parts of this province, the list gives nothing which is not current among the Hindus of this province taken as a whole.

১ মোকাম, ২ মজবুত, ৩ মোকাবেলা, ৪ মারফত, ৫ কবুল, ৬ কয়েদ, ৭ গরাদ, ৮ জিদ, ৯ ইস্তাফা, ১০ ইনাম, ১১ বক্শিস্, ১২ ইজ্জত, ১৩ খোরাক, ১৪ খয়রাত, ১৫ চালাক, ১৬ তারিখ, ১৭ জাহান্নাম, ১৮ ফকির, ১৯ পয়দা, ২০ বেয়াদব, ২১ বাদে, ২২ সরবত, ২৩ হল্লাক, ২৪ ইজার, ২৫ চাপকান, ২৬ ফরাশ, ২৭ গর্দান, ২৮ জান, ২৯ হিসাব, ৩০ জমা, ৩১ জায়গা, ৩২ জরিপ, ৩৩ করতব, ৩৪ খাপ্পা, ৩৫ খামখেয়ালি, ৩৬ ধরপাকড়, ৩৭ তাগিদ, ৩৮ দরদ, ৩৯ পয়মাল, ৪০ উষুল, ৪১ ফতুর, ৪২ দৌলতি, ৪৩ মজলিস, ৪৪ উজার, ৪৫ আসবার, ৪৬ নকল, ৪৭ নোকরি, ৪৮ তাগদ, ৪৯ পাজি, ৫০ বদমাস, ৫১ হারামজাদা, ৫২ সরদার, ৫৩ আসবাব, ৫৪ কেচ্ছা, ৫৫ জলদি, ৫৬ জখম, ৫৭ খুন, ৫৮ কর্জ, ৫৯ মেয়াদ, ৬০ মর্জি, ৬১ গরজ, ৬২ ঝালর, ৬৩ জেলা, ৬৪ খোরাক, ৬৫ ওয়াশিল, ৬৬ ঝুটা, ৬৭ জবরদস্তি, ৬৮ ওস্তাদ, ৬৯ লড়াই, ৭০ তশিল, ৭১ কতল, ৭২ চড়াও, ৭৩ তাজ্জব, ৭৪ আজব, ৭৫ দোকান, ৭৬ ছুনিয়া, ৭৭ হাওয়া, ৭৮ আব্‌হাওয়া, ৭৯ হুস্তি, ৮০ কুস্তি, ৮১ এলাকা, ৮২ মজবুত, ৮৩ মেজাজ, ৮৪ খোস, ৮৫ মর্জি, ৮৬ রোজগার, ৮৭ আদব, ৮৮ কায়দা, ৮৯ মোকাবেলা, ৯০ জেম্মা, ৯১ তারিফ, ৯২ খোস, ৯৩ বাহার,

৯৪ পেশা, ৯৫ ময়দান, ৯৬ মস্গুল, ৯৭ কায়দা, ৯৮ কিস্তি,
৯৯ কাবার, ১০০ নোকসান।

The genius of every language frames certain whimsical rules, sometimes in conformity with philological laws and often violating them, to which every word of an alien origin must submit before it is allowed a place in the literature of that language. The Greeks and the Chinese have distorted words of our country quite obviously, as will be observed from the accounts their travellers have left of India. In fact, in the accounts of travel left by Megasthenes, Hiuen Tsang and Fa Hien the Indian names are often so greatly distorted that they become a puzzle to us in our attempts at identification. Even now the English do the same thing in regard to Indian names. They hear recited before them Indian names night and day, yet they will call আশু as এয়াসু. All my European friends call me ডিনেশ. In “গোরক্ষবিজয়” and some early Bengali works we find a process of Indianising Arabic and Persian words which made them acceptable in literature. For instance, the word যিজি derived from Arabic থিজর passed current in literary compositions after having been metamorphosed into an Indian word. I think the Moulvis of the latter day in Bengal rather fastidiously observed the correctness of the pronounciation of Arabic and Persian words even in their vernacular speech. But however

praiseworthy their zeal might have been in the cause of linguistic purity, the Hindu community could not find their way to accept the words with all their exotic peculiarities in their literature. I find some of the Muhammadan scholars of the present day are trying their level best to carry on the same process of correction and introduce words in their pure Arabic and Persian garb in Bengali compositions. I do not know how far their attempts will be successful in this direction. All alien words must submit to the whims of a language before they are admitted a place in it ; this seems to be the law in all countries.

The most typical work in the field of our early prose which introduced the greatest amount of Arabic and Persian element is “প্রতাপাদিত্য চরিত” by Ram Ram Basu. He uses exotic words, most of which are no longer understood. But it is certain that at one time they were quite familiar. The meaning of the word ওফাত is perhaps death, but only the Arabic and Persian scholars will be able to illuminate us on আরজদাস্ত, অঞ্জাম, মুরচাবন্দি, বেহন্দে and similar words that lie strewn over the pages of ‘প্রতাপাদিত্য চরিত’. As specimens of composition we beg to quote one or two short passages.

(a) রাজা তোড়ল দুই লক্ষ সেনার উপর সেনাপতি প্রবল পরাক্রমে হেঁতুস্থান হইতে বাহির হইয়া ক্রমে ক্রমে ২ মাস বাণারসের সরহর্দে যে স্থানে দাউদের সেনার মুয়চাবন্দি পৌঁছিলেন এ সম্বাদ পূর্বে ওকিল

হেঁতুস্থান হইতে দাউদকে লিখিয়াছে তাহাতেই দাউদ আপনার দরবস্ত সেনাগণ উত্তর পশ্চিমভাগে পাঠাইয়া স্থানে স্থানে মুরচাবন্দি করিয়া সতঃ সাবধানে রহিয়াছে ।

(b) খানাজাতে সৈন্য মুরচাবন্দি করিয়া মজবুতিতে আপন মলাকে কতৃ করিব ।

In an article in the "Calcutta Review," 1850, the style of this book was condemned. The writer says "its style a kind of Mosaic, half Persian, half Bengali, indicates the pernicious influence which the Mahomedans had exercised over the Sanskrit-derived languages." The Rev. J. Long also condemns the style of 'প্রতাপাদিত্য' as corrupted by an admixture of Persian words. We cannot, however, subscribe to these contemporary opinions. Neither is Bengali a Sanskrit-derived language, nor is "প্রতাপাদিত্য চরিত," a hotchpotch or jargon in which the Persian element has been allowed to preponderate, though there are certainly many Persian words in the book. As the subject which Ram Ram Basu took up was one which mainly dealt with the political conditions of the country and with martial operations, it was inevitable that there should be some Persian and Arabic elements in its language; but in spite of these, the sketch drawn by the author is graphic, lively and pleasant to read. One reads the whole work with a sustained interest and one's curiosity does not flag, though one occasionally tumbles

over words of an exotic origin. The account is characterised by brevity and is so interesting that it reads like a romance. Occasionally when tragic events are described a pathetic situation is created by a few well-chosen forcible words. In spite of the charge that Ram Basu has imported a large number of Persian words in his work, we must, for the sake of justice, say that when domestic episodes are described, there is an absolute absence of the Persian element. We beg to give an extract from one of such passages.

“পরে জ্যোতিষিক জ্যোতিষের বহুবিধ গ্রন্থ লইয়া সভাস্থল হইলে লগ্ন নিরূপণ করিয়া কুমার বাহাদুরের কোষ্ঠি স্থির করিলেন। তাহার ফলশ্রুতি এই হইল সর্ববিষয়েই উত্তম কিন্তু পিতৃদ্রোহী ॥ মহারাজ ইহাতে হরিষ বিষাদ হইলেন। কুমারের প্রতিপালন যথেষ্ট মতেতে করিলেন সময়ক্রমে মহাঘটা করিয়া অনুরোধ করিলেন নাম রাখিলেন প্রতাপাদিত্য। পরে কুমারের বৃদ্ধি হইতে লাগিল চন্দ্রকলার ন্যায় অতিশয় ভাগ্যবান কুমার রাজা বসন্তরায়ের অতি প্রীতি কুমারের প্রতি কতককালে কুমারের পঞ্চবর্ষ বয়ঃক্রম বিদ্যা অভ্যাসকরণের আরম্ভ হইল দশ বার বৎসরের সময় সর্ব বিদ্যাতেই বিশারদ। (Typical Selections, Vol. II, p. 1696.)

Ram Basu states in the preliminary part of his book that one of the sources of historical information to which he was indebted for his প্রতাপাদিত্য চরিত was a Persian memoir of the hero of the tale. The influence of that Persian work must account for the lavish use of the words of that language in the প্রতাপাদিত্য চরিত.

The Moslem influence mainly resulted in the

importation of some Arabic, Persian and Urdu words into the Bengali Vocabulary ; but a wholesale change was brought on by the advent of the English. The Bengali style flowed for a time into an altogether new channel. The style of this transition-period presents uncouth forms of expression—it is sometimes abnormally pedantic and sometimes unintelligible. But before dealing with this epoch of Bengali prose, we shall again take a little time in indicating the genius of our old prose-construction. We shall see that certain mannerisms and characteristics of the old prose style were latterly given up on account of the influence of English and Sanskrit. There is a tendency of the present prose-style to revert to its pristine simplicity, but we are not sure, if some of the old forms, given up for nearly half a century, can be again revived.

CHAPTER II.

(a) *Omission of Verbs.* (b) *Poetical forms in prose-construction.* (c) *Suffixes.* (d) *Adjectives and pronouns.* (e) *Adverbs.* (f) *Verbal peculiarities.*

(a) *Omission of Verbs.*

One of the most striking peculiarities of our old prose is omission of verbs in sentences. In the back-woods of Bengal even now when old women tell nursery tales to young children, they still cling to the old ways, and seldom use a verb, when they can avoid it. For instance, it is common to hear a story from the grandams of an old village in the following style:—

“এক যে রাজা। তার দুই স্ত্রী। এক স্ত্রী বক্যা আর এক স্ত্রীর একটা ছেলে। ছেলেটা অতি রূপবান্ ও গুণশীল। একদিন আকাশে বড়ই মেঘের ষটা। রাজকুমারের ইচ্ছা সঙ্গীদের সহ হরিণ শীকারের ছলে বনে গমন।”

We can cite innumerable instances of this sort of omission of verbs from the old prose works, we have already referred to. The sentences are complete in themselves without verbs. For instance in the *Pratāpādityacharit* (p. 1688), “বাদশাহ মহা রোষান্বিত” is a complete sentence, the verb *হইলেন* being understood. In *Kṛṣṇachandra charit* (*History of Bengali Language*, p. 895) “অত্যন্ত নবাব সিরাজদৌলার বিষয় বদন” is also a complete sentence

without a verb. “মধ্যে মধ্যে বামহস্তে দু একটা মসলা বদন,” Bābubilās (Typical Selections, Vol. II, p. 1739) here the word “বদন” signifies বদনে ফেলেন. “তাহার বন্ধু হরিদত্ত এক বণিক অতিশয় নির্দ্বন্দ্ব,”—Itihāsmālā by Carey (Ed. 1812, p. 32) this is a complete sentence without any verb. ‘সেখানে ঐ সিংহের মন্ত্রীপুত্র দুইজন করটক ও দমনক নামে জম্বুকদ্বয়, Hitopodesh (Ed. 1812, p. 82) by Goloknath Sarma. “সেই স্থানে এক কুণ্ড তাহাতে কেলী কদম্বের গাছ বেষ্টিত (Typical Selections, Vol. II, p. 1674).

In the theological works of the Vaisnavas, we come across instances of this sort of omission of verbs very frequently; as—প্রথম কৃষ্ণের গুণ নির্ণয়। শব্দ গুণ, গন্ধ গুণ, রূপ গুণ, রস গুণ, স্পর্শ গুণ, এই পাঁচ গুণ। শব্দ গুণ কর্ণে, গন্ধ গুণ নাসাতে, রূপ গুণ নেত্রে, রস গুণ অধরে, স্পর্শ গুণ অঙ্গে। এই পঞ্চ গুণ পূর্বব্রাহ্মণের উদয় (History of Bengali Language and Literature, pp. 837-38). From old genealogical works also, we can cite many instances “আদিশূর রাজা বড় প্রতাপযুক্ত রাজা। পঞ্চ গোত্রে পঞ্চ ব্রাহ্মণ আনয়ন কইর্যা, গোড়মগুল পবিত্র কইর্যা, আদিশূর রাজার স্বর্গারোহণ (History of Bengali Language and Literature, p. 836). Even in the Sunyapurān, the original composition of which is traced to the tenth century A. D., we find this characteristic of the prose style, as in “পচ্চিম দুআরে কে পণ্ডিত। সেতাই যে চারি শঅ গতি।” In our conversational language omission of verbs is even now a characteristic feature. Though the সন্ধ্যা ভাষা is incomprehensible to us, yet the omission of verbs in sentences

in the prose writings of Chandīdās, written more than five centuries ago, forms a striking feature about which no one can have any doubt while reading the following extract.

“চৈতন্য রূপের রা চ অধরূপ লাড়ি। রা অক্ষরে রাগ লাড়ি।
চ অক্ষরে চেতন লাড়ি। রএতে চ মিশাল। ইবে এক অঙ্গ লাড়ি।
রাগ রতি। লাড়ির নাম সুখ। সেই লাড়ি সাতাইশ প্রকার।”

A verb is an almost inevitable factor in the syntax of the English language and there is scarcely any sentence in English without a verb. It was Rājā Rāmmohan Ray who first felt that a sentence without a verb becomes somewhat weak and halting and should not be tolerated in decent literature. I do not know how this idea seized him, for he must have been familiar with the conversational language around, though probably he had not an adequate knowledge of the old prose-literature of his country. This sense of so-called want was probably created in him by his familiarity with English. The profuse use of verbs in that tongue produced this feeling of want which actually did not exist; just as a bare-headed man feels the need of a hat when he sees a man with it. Whatever may be the reason, we find that in the preliminary chapter of his ‘পৌত্তলিকমত নিরসন’ he remarks “এ ভাষা গদ্যেতে অদ্যাপি শাস্ত্র কিংবা কাব্য বর্ণনায় আইসে নাই।” (The Bengali prose has not yet been used for the composition of any scriptural or secular work.) Then he makes the important pronouncement

“যাবৎ ক্রিয়া না পাইবেন তাবৎ পর্য্যন্ত বাক্যের শেষ অঙ্গীকার করিয়া অর্থ করিতে চেষ্টা না পাইবেন (As long as the reader will not find a verb, he must not take a sentence as complete and he should not make any effort to make out its sense). By way of illustration, he forms a sentence which looks very queer owing to his attempt to borrow from the English syntax. This is his illustration “ব্রহ্ম যাঁহাকে সকল বেদে গান করেন আর যাঁহার সঙ্গার অবলম্বন করিয়া জগতের নির্ব্বাহ চলিতেছে সকলের উপাস্ত হইলেন।” and then comments that though the word “ব্রহ্ম” is the first word of the sentence and ‘হইলেন’ is the last, far removed from it, yet the reader must know that the former is the nominative and the latter its verb, the intermediate sentence, however long it may be, is an adjectival clause and should not puzzle the reader as to the inevitable connection which the nominative has with its verb. The Rājā had certainly a misgiving that this sort of importation of a verb into a sentence would sound unfamiliar and strange to the Bengali ear, so he gives an assurance that though the ordinary reader may find it difficult to understand the construction of the sentence, he will certainly become accustomed to this method of prose style by taking help from scholars.

It is thus seen that the profuse use of verbs in the later Bengali prose is mainly derived from one of the fountain-heads of Bengali letters who,

no doubt, introduced this innovation by imitating the English syntax.

(b) *Poetical Forms in Prose-Construction.*

Under this head, we do not merely refer to the use of poetical words in prose such as জিজ্ঞাসেন for জিজ্ঞাসা করেন, পাশরেণ for বিস্মৃত হন (Jnanadi-sadhana, Typical Selections, Vol. II, p. 1752), আইলে for আসিলে, কেমনে for কেমন করিয়া, (Brindaban-parikrama, Typical Selections, Vol. II, pp. 1674-75) বাহুরিলেন for প্রত্যাগমন করিলেন (Pratāpādityacharit, T. S., Vol. II) but also to poetical mannerisms introduced in prose. The prose literature of this early English period is interspersed with poetical forms which sound strange to our ears. We shall here illustrate our remarks by a few examples.

1. “ভুক্তমতি প্রবিষ্ট হইল আসিয়া দাউদের অন্তরে।” (Pratāpādityacharit, T. S., Vol. II, p. 1685).

2. “নিবেদন করিল সমস্ত বিবরণ দাউদের ঠাই।”—(Pratāpādityacharit, T. S., Vol. II, p. 1692).

3. “কি মতে বৃদ্ধি কি মতে পতন।”—(Pratāpādityacharit, T. S., Vol. II).

4. “এই দৃঢ় আমার পণ।” (Pratāpādityacharit, T. S., Vol. II).

5. “আপনে দিল্লীশ্বর।”—(Pratāpādityacharit, T. S., Vol. II). [স্বয়ং দিল্লীশ্বর] the use of ‘আপন’ for স্বয়ং is very common in old Bengali poetry. In

Krittivas's Rāmāyan, we find “আপনি করিছে সাজ লঙ্কার অধিকারী” (Lankā-kanda).

6. বিপরীত বুদ্ধি দাউদে ঘটিল—(Pratāpāditya-charit, T. S., Vol. II, p. 1685).

This line reminds us of one in our popular nursery-song, which runs thus: “স্ববুদ্ধি তাঁতির ছেলে কুবুদ্ধি ঘটিল।”

7. নিগুঢ় বলিলেন তাহারদিগকে নবাব (Pratāpāditya-charit, T. S., Vol. II, p. 1688).

8. ব্যাজ for বিলম্ব—(Pratāpāditya charit).

9. দুহার for উভয়—(Pratāpādityacharit, T. S., Vol. II).

10. প্রাতঃবাক্যে লেখক কহেন এমত বিদ্বান সন্তান বাঁচা ভার (Babubilās, T. S., Vol. II, p. 1738).

11. লিখন আছে পাষাণে। (পাষাণে খোদিত আছে) বৃন্দাবন পরিক্রমা—(T. S., Vol. II, p. 1674).

12. শুনহে বসুজা। (Carey's Kathopokathan, T. S., Vol. II, p 1677).

13. হিরণ্যক কহিতেছে শুনহে আমি অতিঅল্প শক্তি—(Golok Pundit's Hitopodesh, p. 26).

One may suppose that on account of our whole literary atmosphere being charged with poetry, the poetical element showed itself in our early prose, so that there is nothing curious in it. To a certain extent this view may be correct, but I would request my reader to consider the matter carefully and say, if the adverbial clause does not even now follow the verb in our conversational language. In modern Bengali prose adverbial clauses and participles always precede

the verb, unless very rarely this order is reversed for emphasising any part of a sentence. Why and how the position of the adverbial adjunct and participle was first altered cannot be ascertained, but that which does not strike as unfamiliar in the conversational language becomes unfamiliar and queer in written literature. And the modes of expression that might have been adopted quite in a natural way after the conversational model, are now attributed to the influence of the poetical literature. We do not assert our views in this respect one way or the other dogmatically, but only state the case and ask you to come to your own conclusion after considering the question carefully. It is certain that the innovation was not the result of imitating the English syntax, for the simple reason that the adverbial adjunct generally follows the verb in that language.

In quite modern times, a class of writers have begun to put adverbial and participle adjuncts after the verb. In conversation this is tolerated but see how un-Bengali-like it looks in written literature! Babu Abanindranath Tagore, so far as I remember, has started this innovation, but the following is quoted from the writings of one of his imitators—

- (a) “বুকের রক্তটুকু জল হয়ে বেরিয়ে আস্তো,
ঝরনা-ঘামের ডাগর ফোঁটার।

- (b) দখিন থেকে হাওয়া সেবার ফাণ্ডনেও আঙুন
হয়ে এসে শিল-হানা বুষ্টির পিচকারী মেরে
হোলি খেলে গেল বেচারীর বুকের উপর।
- (c) সেই দেশে সে বিকট হয়ে দেখা দিল—হাড়ের
নুপুর পায়ে দিয়ে। Bharati, p. 703, 44th year,
No. 9, Poush, 1327.

(c) *Suffires.*

The case-endings in our early prose present an interesting variety. We have referred to জিহঁ তিহঁ used in the third person singular, imported to the orthodox Vaisnab literature from Hindi. The whole range of Bengali prose in the first quarter of the nineteenth century presents an extensive use of such forms as তোমারদের, তোমারদিগের, আমারদের, আমারদিগের, তাহারদের, তাহারদিগের, in the genitive case. It is difficult to say how the intervening letter 'র' came into existence. In the colloquial dialect this 'র' has no place in any part of the province, so far as we know. In some parts of the country however, the forms আমাদের, তোমাদের, তাহাদের, are used in the colloquial language. I believe those people who began to write Bengali-prose early in the nineteenth century belonged to such districts, and these scholars, prejudiced in favour of the peculiarities of their spoken dialect, retained the forms in their prose composition after having softened them a little by changing দেব

into 'রদের'; the double দ is softened by importing a 'র' in the middle. Thus we find আমাদের changed into আমারদের, তোমাদের into তোমারদের and so on. It should be noted that this form in the genitive case had been unknown in the earlier prose works, and was allowed to pervade the decent prose literature of Bengal in later times for a quarter of a century till the middle of the 19th, after which this 'র' was given up. We find this 'র' in most of the works written between 1800 and 1825. We find it in the works of Carey and Marshman and in 'Pratāpādityacharit,' 'Probodhchandrika' and other standard works of the period. Ram Basu, however, sometimes uses তোমাদের instead of তোমারদের, though the latter form is also a familiar one in his works (T. S., Vol. II).

'এ' as a suffix denoting the nominative case is a very old sign. It is most probably derived from the affix 'এন' of the Sanskrit instrumental nominative. In Prakrit, we find 'এন' reduced to 'এ' and Bengali derived it from the latter source. It shows that originally Bengali sentences were of a passive form. शिष्येण कथितम् in Sanskrit, is শিষ্যে কহেন in Bengali (Jnanadi-sadhana, T. S., Vol. II, p. 1752). This 'এ' as denoting the nominative case is familiar in the prose-literature of the period under review. In the Pratāpādityacharit, we find তাহাতে ঘটয়াছে meaning তাহা ঘটয়াছে (T. S., Vol. II). It should

be stated that although, we have been successful in removing this ‘এ’ from the nominative case in our modern prose, in the spoken dialect of this country—especially in Eastern Bengal—this ‘এ’ holds the supreme sway. রাজায় ডেকেছে, রামে চেয়েছে, বাঘে ধরেছে and hundreds of such expressions indicate that this indelible sign of the original passive construction of our sentences will ever attest the truth on this point, though we are trying our best to do away with passive forms altogether in our construction in our written prose. The accusative sign ‘কে’ was not stereotyped in Bengali in those days. We find in the Jnanadi-sadhana, the word আমারে for আমাকে (T. S., Vol. II), so the form current in western Bengal was not yet so far recognised in prose as to be able to override or reject the claims of the forms in use in other parts of this province. In the third person singular Carey uses, সিটি for সেইটি and পুত্রতির for পুত্রটির (T. S., Vol. II). It appears that the letter টি, now generally affixed to such words, for the sake of emphasising them such as মানুষটি, বৃক্ষটি, was originally তি, as we find in Carey’s writings.

We have the accusative form তাক for তাকে. The student of old Bengali poetry will certainly be reminded that this তাক and its slightly modified form তাকর in the genitive is very commonly met with in Vaisnava poems (T. S., Vol. II, p. 1014). Sometimes we find the

ablative form used for the accusative as in :—
তবে কি বুঝে বিশ্বাস আমাতে করিলেন (Goloknath's
Hitopodesh, Ed. 1801, p. 73).

(d) *Adjectives and pronouns.*

There seems to be now a difference between the use of 'এ' and 'এই' which is purely of the nature of idiom. We cannot explain why in the line in the Pratāpādityacharit, the expression 'এ বঙ্গভূমিতে' the adjective pronoun 'এ' is faulty. It should be 'এই'. We can not say that 'এ' is to be applied only to animate beings and 'এই' to inanimate objects—though in some cases the rule seems to apply. We use 'এ লোক অতি পাজি' and 'এ গাছটায় মোটেই ফল ফলে না' and such instances may be multiplied. The use of 'এ' in old prose is, however, not like what we find in the modern, as will appear from the line quoted from the Pratāpādityacharit. Many words were taken from the colloquial dialect which have not only disappeared from prose but from colloquial speech, for, the written prose always exercises an influence on the colloquial language. To this, we shall refer in due course. The words সামুদায়িক, সামুদায়ী, ক্ষোভিত, সম্ভ্রান্ত, উৎপন্নীয়, বিলাপনীয়, মুচ্ছিন্ন, সসজ্জমানা, অস্পর্ষ, বিদ্যান্ত, অনিয়ত, and adjectives of this sort are to be found in many of the works written in the early nineteenth century. In the modern prose সামুদায়িক and সামুদায়ী are replaced by সমুদয়.

Even in colloquial dialect the older words are obsolete. The word ক্ষোভিত is not in much use now-a-days, it is substituted by ক্ষুব্ধ, yet ক্ষোভিত is as much a Sanskrit word as ক্ষুব্ধ and is not at all a less dignified expression, as we find the word in an animated verse of Chandi “ক্ষোভিত শেবপাতালং ধনুর্জ্যানিস্বনে।” The fashionable literature accepts some words and rejects others often by a freak without any rhyme or reason. The word সম্ভ্রান্ত which is now associated with good breeding and high status in life, was not, however, used in that sense in the early prose literature. It always meant ‘পুরস্কৃত’ or rewarded. We cannot here discuss its various derivative meanings and their connection with the root verb, but in classical Sanskrit the word সম্ভ্রান্ত meant what the word ভ্রান্ত means now-a-days, as in সম্ভ্রান্ত হৃদয়োরামঃ, etc. (Rāmāyan, Aranya Kanda, Chap. 64, Verse 38, উৎপন্নীয় and বিলাপনীয় are certainly the corrupt colloquial forms of the words উৎপন্ন and বিলাপযুক্ত and modern prose has only corrected the words. মুচ্ছিন্ন = উদ্ভিন্ন, or দিশাহারা ; সসজ্জমান = সজ্জিত. The word অস্পর্শ was often used in an altogether different sense from its use now. It meant গুপ্ত. A European writer writes ‘অস্পর্শ উকিল.’ It means that the pleader remained incognito or গুপ্ত. Ram Vasu uses the word in a somewhat similar sense. He speaks of a man who fled away and remained concealed as “অস্পর্শ হইয়া রহিলেন.”

বিদ্বাস্ত is even now in use in the colloquial speech of Eastern women. It is a corrupt form of বিদ্বামস্ত or বিদ্বাবস্ত. Dasarathi Ray corrects this colloquial word and puts it as বিদ্বাবস্ত in his celebrated abuse of the Vaisnavas “এক এক জন কিবা বিদ্বাবস্ত, করেন কিবা সিদ্বাস্ত, বদরীকাকে ব্যাখ্যা করেন কচু।” The word বিদ্বাস্ত may be explained as implying, “the end or summit of learning,” but I think it more probably to be a corrupt form of “বিদ্বামস্ত.” নিভূতি is a corruption of নিভূত. The word is frequently used in this corrupt form by Ram Ram Vasu. ‘অনিয়ত’ is one of the most queer expressions in the writings of this age; this word in the colloquial language of the rustics and women means quite the contrary of what it really implies—অনিয়ত means নিয়ত, and Ram Vasu uses it in this sense, just as the word অকুমারী is often used for কুমারী. We find in ‘Prachin patra’ the word পেছলা, now obsolete. It was a very common expression denoting arrears, in the sixteenth century. We find this word very often in Kavikankan Chandi. Such as in ‘মাংসের পেছলা বাকী ধারি দেড় বুড়ি.’ The spelling of the word কয়েক was কএক. The word স্বকীয়, we find used by Mrityunjaya Sarma where we use স্বীয়,—স্বকীয় গোকে = স্বীয় গরুকে (Pravodhchandrika, Typical Selections, Volume II, p. 1703). We find Carey writing ‘অসংখ্য ক্রোধ হইল.’ “সংক্ষিপ্ত করিতে” was used to denote reduction in the Pratāpāditya-charit, as in “পরাক্রমাদি সংক্ষিপ্ত করিতে লাগিলেন.”

In the Babuvilas we find the word ‘আনন্দমান’ for আনন্দিত and ‘আইন খবরদার’ for আইনজ্ঞ ।

(e) *Adverbs.*

The word কোথা in old prose used to be written as কথা ; কেনে for কেন is also commonly met with. This কেনে in a still earlier age was কেনি as in Mukundaram’s line, অভিমানে ঘর ছাড়বি কেনি ” “ আস্তে আস্তে ” is written as আস্তে আস্তে in the Pratāpādityacharit. The word যুক্তে Ram Vasu uses in the place of সহযোগে. He uses the expression নিরোপায় ক্রমে for নিরূপায় ভাবে and হকুমান ক্রমে for আজ্ঞাক্রমে. The word মতে as part of an adverbial clause sometimes means ‘like’ as in দাসমতে, like a slave ; but the word also means pretext as in শীকার খেলিবার মতে—on the pretext of hunting. The word সবত্র is always used by Ram Basu as সবত্রের ; we find the word অনুদিন for modern প্রতিদিন in Mirtyunjaya’s Prabodh Chandrika. He sometime uses slang while reproducing the colloquial language. The word কহনে in ‘কহনে গেল’ is a corrupt form of কোন স্থানে and largely finds a place in the colloquial dialect of East Bengal Marshman writes নৈপুণ্যরূপে for নিপুণরূপে in his ইংলণ্ডীয়দের রাজবিবরণ (T. S., Vol. II, pp. 1741-53). We find Raja Rammohan Roy putting the suffix ‘ও’ after the word কিস্তি making the compound word কিস্তিতো.

(f) *Verbal peculiarities.*

The suffix 'ক' was generally put after a verb when the nominative was in the third person singular. Thus our old prose abounds with instances of করিলেক, খাইলেক, যাইলেক, etc. We have already referred to the poetical forms জিজ্ঞাসেন, পাশরেন, বাহিরিলেন, etc., which are now obsolete. Ram Ram Basu uses the colloquial forms now current in East Bengal of জাওনেতে, জাননেতে, থাকনে and পড়নেতে, etc., and the forms, very familiar in poetry, of থাকহ, দেহ, শুনহ, etc., are found profusely in জ্ঞানাদি সাধনা and other books. The word থাকে was generally used in the sense of ছিল, for instance in the lines "দণ্ডকারণ্যে এক মহাবল ব্যাঘ্র থাকে" (p. 171, ইতিহাসমালা by Carey, Ed. 1812) and 'এক অরণ্যে কোন শৃগাল থাকে' (p. 171, 'হিতোপদেশ by Golak Pundit, Ed. 1801). The word 'থাকে' does not mean আছে as may appear to many. Read the context and the meaning ছিল will be apparent. Thus থাকে often indicates the past tense whereas the instances of the use of আছে and আছেন indicating present tense are numerous (see pp. 62, 72, 100, 105, 112, 148, 149, 150, 152, হিতোপদেশ by Golak Pundit, Ed. 1801). The form ছিল in the sense of থাকে (past tense) is also to be found on p. 205, Golak Pundit's Hitopodesha, Ed. 1801. The familiar expressions আইলাম, আইলো, etc., were largely used in our old prose "হে রাজা আমি তোমার রাজ্যে আইলাম" (ইতিহাসমালা by Carey, p. 245, Ed.

1812). “আর কত পণ লাগিবে তাহা জানিয়া আইলে পত্রাদি করিয়া সামগ্রীর আয়োজন করা যায়” (Carey’s কথোপকথন, T. S., Vol. II, p. 1679). There are slight variations in the idioms and phrases from those current now. For instance mark “মরুক সে যে হোক” in Carey’s কথোপকথন (T. S., Vol. II, p. 1680). In modern prose this would be মরুক গে যাক্. Sometimes there is a curious blending of words such as কহনাতীত (see প্রতাপাদিত্য চরিত, it is used in the sense of বলা বাহুল্য). We also find nouns occasionally metamorphosed into participle verbs, the phrase নিরীক্ষণে রহিলেন in the প্রতাপাদিত্য চরিত means “remained watching,” the word নিরীক্ষণে meaning “in the act of watching.” Ram Basu uses the word মতে very often in a peculiar way. He finishes a sentence and then begins another with the word মতে which is equivalent to ইহা হইলে পর (on this being done). The word in such instances may be parsed as a participle verb. We have got the line “শীকার খেলিবার মতে” where “মতে” means “making a pretext of.” Here also the word has the sense of the present participle. We need not increase the length of this chapter by citing more instances. It is quite possible that as there was no fixed Bengali Grammar, the simpler form of prose style was formed in literature by a free loan of colloquial words current in various localities; so that provincialisms entered profusely in to our

prose, and the standard could not be the same everywhere. Ram Basu, a native of Nimta, used words which in some cases could not be understood by the writers of other districts of Bengal. But we shall presently see that unification in verbal inflections soon came over the spirit of our prose literature owing to a change in the social and political conditions of the country. We have seen that in the earliest stages of Bengali poetry provincialisms and local uses were a very marked feature in the poems written in different parts of Bengal. It was the influence of the Vaisnavas that gradually brought this heterogeneous literature to conform to one standard in the matter of suffixes, case-endings and verbal inflections ; so that the more ancient these manuscripts recovered from various parts of Bengal, are, the greater is the variance of forms marked in them. But the later manuscripts, upon which the influence of the Vaisnavas is apparent, shew an unmistakable process of progressive advance towards unification, which in the eighteenth century was so complete that the suffixes and case-endings in the MSS. from Sylhet and Tippera very often present forms similar to those used in the written language of Western Bengal. Just in the same way a great influence came over the spirit of our modern prose in the subsequent epoch marked by British influence

bringing all divergent elements under the banner of a common standard, and in the next lecture I shall proceed to deal with this remarkable change in written Bengali.

CHAPTER III

- (1) *The advent of the English as Rulers of the country.* (2) *Dr. Carey and Fort William Collège.*

It has been observed that whenever the life of people grew stagnant in this country owing to the prevalence of stereotyped customs for long ages, influences have come from outside to turn topsy-turvy our long-standing conventions and awaken our intellectual consciousness to the realisation of truths of an opposite nature, completely lost sight of, in our zeal to follow the foot-prints of our fore-fathers.

Such an influence in the bye-gone age had come from the Moslem world. Bengali, hated as *patois* in the Hindu courts where Sanskrit scholarship reigned supreme, would perhaps never have assumed such a developed form in such a short time, had not the Muhammadan Emperors appointed Pundits and poets to translate Sanskrit works into the Vernacular. An intellectual awakening was perceptible in social and religious institutions of the people as well. The people, steeped in pantheistic faith and religious speculations of a subtle nature, struggling after wile - the-wisp vague-shining theories of different schools of spiritual philosophy, had abandoned the

ways of faith and moral virtues for long ages. Contact with Islam resulted in an intellectual awakening, which led the people to lay more stress on faith and moral virtues than they had done hitherto, and many reformers began to preach the cult of faith and ethical laws, openly declaring the pantheistic views to be mere intellectual reveries which scarcely had the power to redeem a fallen race; and thus the country passed through a great evolution.

The advent of the English, at the next epoch of the annals of our progress, has brought on a similar, nay a far greater, change in the intellectual life of our people, and we shall try to discuss the result of this change chiefly so far as our literary history is concerned with it.

The members of the service of the East India Company found the need of a knowledge of the Vernacular of this province to be essential for the purposes of administration. In those days the help of interpreters was hardly available. Hence the administrators of the country had to acquire a knowledge of Bengali in order to understand intimately the people whom they ruled. This sense of need stimulated them to undertake three kinds of literary ventures.

(1) In 1778 Mr. Nathaniel Halhed published a Bengali Grammar from Chinshura. "He was so well acquainted with Bengali," writes Long, "as some time to pass in disguise as a native."

In the preface to his Grammar he complains that the language of Bengal was a mixed one in which the Arabic and Persian elements preponderated. This Grammar was evidently meant to give an idea of the Bengali Language to the country-men of the writer.

(2) For acquainting the Bengali people with the legal codes it was necessary to publish a translation of the Code of Regulations by Sir Elija Impey, and Mr. Forster published a translation of the work compiled by himself in 1793.

(3) The next thing that European scholars found it necessary for the acquisition of the Vernacular of the province was to compile a dictionary for their use. Natives of a country are always prone to overlook many important points in compiling dictionaries for their own use. The colloquial words are so common and easy to them that the writers do not at all feel the need of explaining them. It is always the pompous words of classic origin which engage their attention. Hence our modern dictionaries, compiled by Bengali scholars, contain a very small element of the local dialect in them. We find that these

Copying of Sanskrit
dictionaries.

writers oftentimes copy Sanskrit vocabularies, and these they publish as Bengali dictionaries. A European scholar scarcely finds any help from such compilations. As he has to acquire his knowledge of the

language mostly through books, he feels puzzled as regards the meanings of colloquial words in our literature. The Bengali dictionaries compiled by European scholars have this striking feature that a greater stress is put upon the colloquial words than upon those derived from classical sources. The European scholars may easily find out the meanings of the latter class of words from classical dictionaries. It is the colloquial element to which they find no guide. Mr. Haughton, a civilian, has done yeoman's service by collecting many hundreds of colloquial words in his Bengali to English dictionary and in his glossary, published in 1825 and 1833 respectively. The price of the former work was Rs. 80. It is a volume of a respectable size, and it would be well if Bengali scholars, instead of clinging to the model of Bāchaspatya Abhidhan would consult Haughton in their lexicographic attempts. But Haughton is now out of print, and other works written more or less on the same lines, such as Froster's dictionary published in 1772 and Miller's Bengali Dictionary, published in 1801, have also shared the same fate. These are, however, real and genuine Bengali dictionaries and it is a pity that Bengali writers have so far lost the spirit of originality at the present day, that instead of collecting materials from the soil of their birth, they make their labour light by filling the

pages of their works with classical words, chiefly culled from Sanskrit dictionaries. In fact the characteristic of this period of our prose-literature is that they were written with commendable care, as the workers had for their object dissemination of really useful knowledge amongst the people. Compared to our present-day prose works, however sparkling they may be, the prose written in those days evidently shows a far greater assiduity and application on the part of the authors. In the department of grammar also, we find the writers of early prose attempting to grasp the real philological laws which govern our dialect differentiating it from the classical language with which it is now inevitably linked together by grammarians. The Gauriya bhāsār Byākaran written by Rājā Ram Mohan Ray in 1833 will show the truth of this remark. The Rājā writes that in Bengali the difference of pronunciation between শ, ষ, স is not observed but there are certain exceptions to this rule. When শ, is joined with র, ঋ, ৗ, it is pronounced as স, as in শ্রদ্ধা, শৃগল, প্রশ্ন. Similarly when স is joined with ত, থ, ন, র, ঋ, it retains its Sanskritic sound of স as in স্তব, স্থান, অব and স্বষ্টি. In all other places, it is pronounced as শ.” Then he proceeds to discover peculiar laws of the Bengali language in respect of the cases. “In the dative case,” says the Rājā, “those words which have the sound of

the long vowel আ in the last letter adopt তে, অয় and য় as suffix. But those words which have ই, ঈ, উ, ঊ, এ, ঐ, প, ও in their last letters adopt তে to denote the locative form. Instances of the former are to be found in the forms মৃত্তিকাতে and মৃত্তিকায়, থালাতে and থালায়, শয্যাতে and শয্যায়, etc., and of the latter in ছুরিতে, হাতীতে, রজনীতে, etc. Regarding the forms of Bengali words in singular and plural, the learned author gives curious rules which, however humorous, testify to his accurate observations. The suffixes গুলি, সকল, etc., are generally adopted to indicate the plural number; in the case of men and higher beings, the suffix রা is often used, and it is, generally speaking, restricted to them only. When, however, the suffix রা is used in the case of lower animals it is implied that such words do no longer signify them. "For instance 'গরু সকল' means cows, but গরুরা is used to imply those men who are stupid as cows."¹ How many grammarians in Bengal of this age would care to observe the laws of the Bengali language so scrupulously. They would rather copy rules from the *Mugdhabodh*, whether they apply to Bengali or not, and give a dignified classical position to Bengali without much labour.

Another scholarly member of the East Indian Civil Service Mr. Wilkins (afterwards decorated with Knighthood), did a great service to Bengali

¹ See H. B. L. L., p. 975.

prose by establishing a press for which he cut punches with his own hands and trained Panchanan Karmakar in the art. This scholar tried his utmost to spread education in Bengal by publishing Vernacular works from his press.

(2) *Dr. Carey and Fort William College.*

When the members of East Indian Civil Service thus felt the necessity of encouraging a study of the Vernacular and compiled dictionaries and grammars and established a Press for publication of vernacular works, there came a young missionary to Bengal in 1793, who was impelled by no other motive than a great love for all human beings irrespective of creed and colour, leading him to exert his utmost power in the cause of Vernacular literature. Political necessities and unlimited pecuniary resources no doubt produced satisfactory results supported by public finance, but nothing is to be compared with genuine love which breathes inspiration to others and produces results of a far-reaching nature. Carey died in the year 1834, so his stay altogether in Bengal was for a period of 41 years. Bengali prose really made great strides owing to the impetus given by Dr. Carey. He was a cobbler by birth and in his native country might be seen with a wallet of shoes on his shoulders walking ten or twenty miles to Northampton, but the fire of genius.

which is another name for life-long devotion was in him. He passed through unspeakable difficulties and great sacrifices in order to further the cause of our early prose. In the year 1709 he established a Press at Serampur, in which a fount of punches was prepared by Panchanan Karmakar and his nephew Monohar. From this press was issued a part of his translation of the Bible in 1800.

Just at the time when Carey was eagerly looking forward to finding adequate means for the promotion of the cause of the Vernacular prose, an opportunity presented itself which opened enormous resources to our scholar who was wishing with all the ardour of his heart for a field in which he could employ all his whole-hearted energy in the cause of Vernacular culture. In the year 1800 Wellesley established the Fort William College in Calcutta. The object which this great statesman had in view was really a noble one. He saw that only a few European administrators were entrusted with the task of the administration of a large province like Bengal. He therefore thought it indispensable to make the members of the Civil Service thorough scholars in the Vernaculars of this province. He conceived a great plan by which arrangements should be made to give the Members of the Civil Service a

Fort William College
1801.

thorough up-to-date education in European literature and science. But that each member, before he entered his career as an administrator should pass examinations in the Vernacular of a most difficult and complicated nature. He would not only be required to read the standard Vernacular works with thoroughness but before he obtained a degree entitling him to a promotion in the service, he should hold learned disputations in the Vernacular of the province before an assembly of Indian Scholars, Rajas and noblemen. On the recommendation of the Fort William College authorities testifying to a civilian's efficiency in the Vernacular literature in such a comprehensive manner he would be entitled to the gain promotion in service.

Dr. Carey was placed in charge of the Vernacular department of this college, and his chief colleagues were Pundit Mirtyunjaya Tarkalankar, Ram Basu, Rajivalochan Mukhopadhyay and Chandi Charan.

From the year 1800 when the Fort William College was established and the devoted services of Carey and his colleagues were secured, we find prose works issuing forth in considerable numbers from the Serampore Press, mostly the result of Carey's indefatigable labour and the encouragement which he gave to Bengali writers. We find that Ram Basu compiled his Pratapaditya

Carey's great influence.

Charit, and Rajivalochan wrote his Krishna-chandra Charit being inspired by the same devoted sponsor. Mirtyunjaya wrote his Probodhchandrika under Carey's inspiration and many European scholars such as Marshman, Felix Carey, Yates and other scholars undertook to contribute Bengali works on various historical and scientific subjects, because they were great admirers of Carey and shared his enthusiasm in the cause of Bengali culture.

Now we must comment on the sort of style which characterised the writers under the influence of the Fort William

The affected style of
the Pundits.

College. Mirtyunjaya was one of the greatest Sanskrit scholars of the age. Marshman in his history of Serampore Mission says that Carey sat under the instruction of the Pundit 3 or 4 hours every day and thus acquired a great proficiency in the Bengali language. Marshman calls Mirtyunjaya a scholar of stupendous learning and compares him to Dr. Johnson not only in the vastness of his erudition but in his rough and unwieldy features as well. Elsewhere he says that Mirtyunjaya was one of the greatest scholars of the age. Carey says of Ram Basu that he was a scholar of uncommon attainments in Persian and Sanskrit. So we see that he secured the services of scholars of extraordinary merit and scholarship for the department of

Vernacular literature. The European friends of Mirtyunjaya must have been struck with his wonderful scholarship displayed in the exposition of the Six schools of philosophy and of the new School of Logic in his *Probodh Chandrika*. The subtilties of speculative philosophy, however congenial to the oriental temperament, proved to be extremely abstruse—nay appalling to the matter-of-fact intellectual calibre of European scholars, and though Carey greatly admired the philosophical portion of the *Probodh-chandrika* written in a grandiloquent prose, he saw that the style would not fulfil the purposes of spreading culture. For popularising scientific, historical, literary and such other studies amongst the Bengalees, the style must be simple, direct and intelligible. So he directed the Pundits to come down from their Olympian heights to the plain of ordinary business life. He induced even the great Mirtyunjaya who ‘talked like a whale’ to write in a simple colloquial style. This, we can easily surmise, was a very uncongenial task for the pundits, for they were burning with enthusiasm to shew their pedantry and vast erudition while writing treatises in the Vernacular. Their subsequent efforts to write the colloquial style and even slang in order to please their sponsor will remind one of the dance of the elephant in the Garden of Eden described by Milton to please Adam and Eve. ‘The unwieldy

elephant, to make them mirth,...wreathed his lithe proboscis" So the Probodhchandrika writing in one page such lines as "অবগীত শিফটচার প্রসিদ্ধ যে তাহাই করিবে লোক প্রসিদ্ধতক্রম করিয়া কিছু করিবে না" (T. S., Vol. II, p. 1716) had to adopt the language of slang in the next, such as "ঠক কহিল এক ছোঁড়াকে ভুলাইয়া বন্ধক দিয়া মুঁদি শালাকে ঠকাইয়া আইলাম। ইহা শুনিয়া তৎপিতা কহিল হাঁ মোর বাছা এই তো বটে হবে না

কেন আমার পুত্র ভাল অন্ন করিয়া
Pedantry and slang.

খাইতে পারিবে। এইরূপে পুত্রের ধন্যবাদ করিয়া ভাৰ্য্যাকে কহিল ওলো মাগি যা শিশু পিঠা কর গা ক্ষুধাতে বাঁচিলা." (T. S., Vol. II, p. 1712) Carey could excuse the slang as we find himself guilty of this charge in his colloquies, but he wanted that the people's language should be popularised in literature for the purpose of the spread of knowledge in the province. He was, therefore, very unwilling to encourage the grandiloquent style, and nowhere through his extensive vernacular compositions is one difficult word to be found on which the average Bengali scholar would halt. The Pundits, though compelled to write in a language which they had hitherto despised as *patois*, were not very much contented with this state of things for, as I have already stated, they had come forward on a call from the Fort William College evidently, it had seemed to them, to shew their vast erudition through the medium of Bengali. There are innumerable instances in this

period of our literature of the absurdities which characterised the compositions of these writers, full of pedantry and of a foolish lack of common sense. We subjoin below extracts from the writings of several Bengali scholars who had tried to give our language a ridiculous air of so-called dignity by imitating Sanskrit phrases and idioms and importing them into our vernacular.

(a) “শ্রীশ্রীগুরুদেব-চরণাবিন্দ-দ্বন্দ্ব-মকরন্দ অজ্ঞাত তিমিরাক্ষ জন-সমূহের জ্ঞানাজ্ঞান গ্রায় সহস্রদল কমল কর্ণিকান্তরে নিরন্তর চিন্তা করিয়া তন্তু চরণ-প্রান্তে কোটি কোটি প্রণাম পূর্বক ধরণিধরেন্দ্র-তনয়া অখিল ব্রহ্মাণ্ড সৃষ্টিকারিণী ত্রিগুণাত্মিক সহিত শ্রীশ্রীআশুতোষ দীন দয়াময় সদাশিব চরণাবিন্দ-দ্বন্দ্ব প্রণামান্তর শ্রীমন্নারায়ণ পরায়ণ সাক্ষাৎ প্রত্যক্ষ দেবত ভূদেব ব্রাহ্মণ সকলের চরণ প্রান্তে প্রণতি পূর্বক বহুতর প্রণাম করিঃ” শ্রীশ্রীসদাশিব বংশ সম্ভব বিহারন্ত দেশাধিপতি শ্রীশ্রীমহারাজাধিরাজ হরেন্দ্র নারায়ণ ভূপ বাহাদুর মহাশয় সদাশয় দান মান গুণ ধ্যান ধারণ কুল নীল বল বীৰ্য্য শৌর্য্য গাঙ্গীৰ্য্য বস্ম্য ধর্ম্ম কর্ম্ম অস্ত্র শস্ত্র নীতি চরিত্র নিতান্ত শাস্ত্র দান্ত্র বিদ্যা বিনয় বিচার রাজ-লক্ষণ রাজ-ব্যবহার শরণাগতজন-প্রতিপালনাদি বিষয়ে এবং রূপলাবণ্যাদিতে যিনি তুলনা রহিত রিপুকুল-রণপক্ষে প্রচণ্ড মার্ত্তণ্ড গ্রায় তাঁহার পূর্ব পুরুষের বিবরণ” (Typical Selections, Vol. II, pp. 1677-1678.)

(b) “অনভিব্যক্ত বর্ণা ধ্বনিমাত্র রাজা পরানায়ী ভাষা প্রথম যেমন অভিনব কুমারদের ভাষা। তদনন্তর অভিব্যক্ত বর্ণমাত্রা পশুস্ত্রী নামক ভাষা দ্বিতীয়া যেমন প্রাপ্ত যৎকিঞ্চিদ্ব্যঙ্গ বালকবাণী। তৎপর পদমাত্রায়ক মধ্যমাবিধা তৃতীয়া ভাষা যেমন পূর্বোক্ত বালকাধিক কিঞ্চিদ্ব্যঙ্গ শিশু

ভাষা। তারপর বাক্যরূপ বৈখরী নামধেরা সকল শাস্ত্রস্বরূপা বিবিধ জ্ঞান প্রকাশিকা সর্বব্যবহার প্রদর্শিকা চতুর্থী ভাষা যেমন লৌকিক শাস্ত্রীয় ভাষা ঈদৃশ রূপে জাতমাত্র বালকের উত্তরোত্তর বয়োবৃদ্ধি ক্রমে ক্রমশঃ প্রবর্তমানা চতুর্ক্যূহ রূপ ভাষা অশ্বাদিতে যুগপৎ প্রবর্তমানত্ব রূপে যদ্যপি প্রতীয়মানা হউন তথাপি পূর্বোক্ত পরা পশ্চ্যন্তী মধ্যমা বৈখরীরূপ চতুর্ক্যূহ রূপেতেই বর্তমানা হউন।” (Typical Selections, Vol. II, pp. 1700-1701.)

(c) “বারংবার অপাব জগদ্ধয়স্থিতি সংলগ্নাদি সাধারণকারণ মানস-বাক্ পথাতে পরমাদ্ভুতিবিধবিচিত্রচিত্তাতীত পরাংপরানন্ত বৈভবানুক্ষণ বিস্তারক অবিরত্যাধ্যাত্মিকাদিবহুবিধতান কলাপ্রকবলিত মানসমানবসমুহ-নিস্তারক পরমকারুণিক মনুজান্তজ বিবিধস্থলচরজলচরাকাশচর কীটপত-ঙ্গাদিজীবকৃত সতত সদসদিচারক জগদেকনিয়ামক বিশ্বোপকারার্থ দিনকর নিশাকরাসংখ্যেয় তারকাদ্যানিশবিলম্বকারক সদচারনিরত সর্জমানমোদক তৎকর্তৃক নিখিলকার্যানুদৃষ্টা শ্রবণমননদ্বারা অকিঞ্চিং স্বরূপাভাসমাত্র রূপকাখিলাধ্যক্ষের প্রতি গণনাতিরিক্ত প্রগতি পূর্বক বিশিষ্টশিষ্ট সদসদি চারক মহাশয় সমূহ সমীপেষু বহুতর বিনয়পুরঃসর নিবেদন।” (History of Bengali Language and Literature, pp. 916-917.)

Whenever the services of a Sanskrit scholar were required for composition of Vernacular prose, they showed their inefficiency and lack of common sense in this way. Even before Mirtyunjaya, we find that court Pundits were employed by the Hindu Rājās to compose model addresses for the use of the court. And we find even there, their foolish attempt to bewilder people by their classical nonsense in the Vernacular prose. In the court of Tippera, the usual form, composed by some Pundit centuries

ago and which is still current, of addressing the king runs thus:—"বিষম সমর বিজয়ী মহা মহোদয়ী পঞ্চশ্রীযুক্ত," etc. Any man that seeks a favour from the Tippera Rājā must follow this model address even now. In the court of Kuchbihar, when one Rājā had to address another, he had to conform to this model address.

(d) "স্বস্তি সকল দিগদন্তি কর্তৃতালাক্ষাল সমীরণ প্রচলিত হিমকর হার হাসকাশ কৈলাস প্রান্তর যশোরশি বিরাজিত ত্রিপিষ্টন ত্রিদশতরঙ্গিনী সলিল দিক্‌কামিনী জীয়মান গুণসন্তান শ্রীশ্রীস্বর্গনারায়ণ মহারাজ প্রতাপেশু।" (Typical Selections, Vol. II, p. 1672.)

In the Lipimālā by Rām Rām Vasu, we find, the following model:—

(e) "রাজাধিরাজ হিন্দুস্থান মাঝ। যাহা দর্পময় ক্ষমা অতিশয়। সরলাসুতকরণ রূপ হেমবরণ। শক্তিমন্ত ধীর। অতি মহাবীর। আত্মলোকপাল। বৈরীমর্দকাল শ্রীমান গুণধর মহারাজ রাজেশ্বর রাজচক্রবর্তীর সাহায্য লিপি লেখা যাইতেছে;" (History of the Bengali Language and Literature, p. 920.)

Alliteration.

It is curious to observe that these Pundits were eager to display their knowledge of rhetoric by indenting passages full of alliteration even in the Bengali manuals meant for children. That this class of writers had scarcely any common sense will be apparent by perusing the Sishubodhak,—a

Alliteration.

book meant for little children in which model letter-writing forms one of the subjects. A husband writes to his wife in the following style in which not only we come across stupid attempts at alliteration, but an extremely vulgar taste. The reply of the husband is no less notorious for similar prolific alliterations and gross humour. Both the letters are quoted below.

“ শ্রীচরণ সরসী দিবানিশি সাধন প্রয়াসী দাসী শ্রীমতী মালতী মঞ্জরী দেবী প্রণম্য প্রিয়বর প্রাণেশ্বর নিবেদনঞ্চাদৌ মহাশয়ের শ্রীপদসরোরুহ স্রবণমাত্র অত্র শুভবিশেষ । পরং মহাশয় ধনাভিলাষে পরদেশে চিরকাল কাল যাপন করিতেছেন যে কালে এদাসীর কালরূপ লগ্নে পাদক্ষেপ করিয়াছেন, সে কাল হরণ করিয়া দ্বিতীয়কালের কালপ্রাপ্ত হইয়াছে, অতএব পরকালে কালরূপকে সাত্ত্বনা করা দুই কালের স্তম্ভকর বিবেচনা করিবেন । * * * অতএব জাগ্রতে নিদ্রিতের ত্রায় সংযোগ সঙ্কলন পরিত্যাগ পূর্বক শ্রীচরণযুগল স্থানং প্রদানং কুরু নিবেদনমিতি ।”
(Banga Bhāsā O Sahitya, p. 532.)

The husband's reply :—

“ শিরোনাম প্রাণাধিকা স্বধর্ম্মপ্রতিপালিকা শ্রীমতী মালতী মঞ্জরী দেবী স্বধর্ম্মাশ্রিতাসু ।”

“ পরম প্রণয়ার্ণব গভীর নীরতীর নিবসিত কলেবরাজ সন্মিলিত নিতান্ত প্রণয়প্রিত শ্রীঅনঙ্গমোহন দেবশর্ম্মণঃ ষাটিতি ষাটিতি বাঙ্কিতান্তঃ-করণে বিজ্ঞাপনঞ্চাদৌ শ্রীমতীর শ্রীকরকমলাঙ্কিত কমল পত্রী পঠিত মাত্র অত্র শুভবিশেষ । বহুদিবসাবধি প্রত্যবধি নিরবধি প্রয়াস প্রবাস নিবাস তাহাতে কর্ম্ম ফাঁস ব্যতিরিক্ত উত্তত্তান্তঃকরণে কালযাপন করিতেছি । অতএব মন নয়ন প্রার্থনা করে যে সর্ব্বদা একতাপূর্ব্বক অপূর্ব্ব সুখোদ্ভব মুখারবিন্দ যথাযোগ্য মধুকরের ন্যায় মধুমাঙ্গাদি আশাদি পরিপূর্ণ হয় । প্রয়াস মীমাংসা প্রণেতা শ্রীশ্রীঈশ্বরেচ্ছা শীতান্তে নিতান্ত

সংযোগপূর্বক কালযাপন কর্তব্য, বিভোপার্জন তদর্থ কর্তৃক দুঃখিতা এতাদৃশ উপার্জনে প্রয়োজন নাই স্থির সিদ্ধান্ত করিয়াছি। জ্ঞাপনমিতি।” (Banga Bhāsā O Sahitya, pp. 532-533)

But even this could be borne, for there is at least some sense in the passages. When, however, we come across the following jargon by a writer and his mad efforts at alliteration from which no sense can be made out, it really vindicates the poor estimation in which the Sanskrit scholar of the old school is held by the people. They still believe that these Pundits are little better than fools, and many fables are current in rural Bengal showing their lack of common sense in all other matters except intellectual speculation and theological subtleties. No one will be able to make head or tail out of the following which nevertheless bristles with alliteration.

“রে পাষণ্ড বণ্ড এই প্রকাণ্ড ব্রহ্মাণ্ড কাণ্ড দেখিয়া ও কাণ্ডজ্ঞান শূন্য হইয়া বকাণ্ড প্রত্যাশার ত্রায় লণ্ড ভণ্ড হইয়া ভণ্ড সন্ন্যাসীর ত্রায় ভক্তি-ভাণ্ড ভঞ্জন করিতেছে এবং গবাপণ্ডের ত্রায় গণ্ডে জন্মিয়া গণ্ডকীস্থ গণ্ড শিলার গণ্ড না বুঝিয়া গণ্ডগোল করিতেছে?” (Banga Bhāsā O Sahitya, p. 533.)

Instances of this nature are plentiful in this period of our literature, and when one reads the Bengali prose style as in this specimen and the literature of the subsequent period, one cannot but come to the conclusion that the Bengali prose style has made a marvellous march towards simplicity and grace. But we assure our

readers that this was quite an artificial style with huge and grotesque accretions, attempted to be engrafted on our prose literature, which in its primitive stages, as we have seen, had been quite unlike any such pedantic nonsense.

One word here should be said in regard to alliteration which has so often been condemned in our old poems. Sir Rabindra Nath Tagore, referring to a passage from Kṛṣṇa Kamal's poems in which there was a display of alliteration, wrote with a sneer, "My friend Dinesh Babu is a great admirer of this

A defence of alliteration.

Kṛṣṇa Kamal!" But alliteration, though often carried to ridiculous excesses for which it is justly condemned in prose, is not always a fault in Bengali poems. It often strikes one with superb beauty, displaying as it does, the great resources of our language. I do not know if there exists any other language which can vie with ours in this respect. In the lines of Kṛṣṇa Kamal "যদি না পাই কিশোরীকে কাজ কি শরীরে," we find two *kishoris* strung together conveying different senses. In the same poem "উপেখিলে রাই, স্থান অখিলে নাই" produces a great phonetic effect by the repetition of the word খিলে, and then in the next sentences "ধর অভরণে—দিও রাইচরণে—যেন মরণে—কিশোরী কৃপা করে মোরে" we find three রণে rhyming with one another each conveying a different sense, and after these lines we find "যে

রাধার লাগি হইলাম বনবাসী ধরা চূড়া বাঁশী কতই ভালবাসি।”

we find the three *basis* rhyming with one another each conveying a different sense. We quote only some short lines to show how alliteration was used to heighten the effect of musical songs in a single line and at the same time exhibit great poetic cleverness. If we ransack the whole treasure of the Bengali literature of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries we shall see how in many poems alliteration shows the innate resources of the Bengali language. Take, for instance, any passage from Dasarathi Ray's writings. I think no other writer has shown the wonderful resources of our language with such marvellous effect. There are so many words in our colloquial speech from which bits may be gathered and strung together with fine phonetic effect, that when our poets first discovered this point of strength in our dialect, they literally fell in love with this figure of speech, and it is no wonder that some of them did follow it with a bad grace carrying it to absurd excesses. I think critical schools should arise to give analysis of the hidden meanings and suggestions conveyed by non-Sanskritic bits in Bengali words derived chiefly from *apabhraṅsa bhāṣa*; these bits not only command a variety of suggestive meanings, but often please by their jingle. In alliteration they produce a marvellous effect by wonderfully changing

shapes, as they are suffixed from one word to another. The sweep and the march of words strung together in alliteration which characterise Dasarathi's poems are really an achievement from a linguistic point of view, and it is not always literary beauty that should be the concern of scholars. Sometimes words in alliteration in our vernacular poems are so smoothly manipulated that they have not at all the look of a pompous classical figure of speech but seem to be quite natural. This shews the distinction between Bengali and classical forms of alliteration. We have got such a large number of Prakrit suffixes with phonetic jingle that any number of poetical lines with alliteration may be composed by one who has a command over the language. In the old Vaisnab song “কানু কহে রাই কহিতে ডরাই ধবলী চরাই মাঠে” no one will apparently suspect the existence of any figure of speech, but alliteration here has come with an easy grace—not at all in its gorgeous classical dress. Mark the different words to which রাই has been suffixed. Bengali in this respect has an advantage over Sanskrit.

It must, however, be said that alliteration in prose is often a failure, and even such a gifted writer as Iswarchandra Gupta who flourished in the middle of the nineteenth century shows himself awkward in his “Prabhakar” while trying to introduce in his prose this figure of speech. Just

see the ridiculous way in which he puts his prose in a poetic form.

“রে মন ! পরমপুরুষের প্রেমপুষ্পের আশ্রাণ একবার নেরে একবার নেরে ; ওরে মন ! ভূতনাথকে একবার দেখ্-রে— একবার দেখ্—রে ; মন রে—মন-রে—শোন্-রে—শোন্-রে ; ও মন ! ব্রহ্মরসে গল্-রে— গল্-রে ; ও চিত্ত ! এই লৌকিক সামান্য রস রাখ্-রে—রাখ্-রে ; তাঁর প্রেমরস চাক্-রে—চাক্-রে, তাঁর ভক্তিরস মাখ্-রে—মাখ্-রে ; ও মন ! তাঁরে ডাক্-রে—ডাক্-রে—ডাক্-রে ।”

(A Discourse on the Bengali Language and Literature by Ramgati Nyaratna, Third Edition, p. 226).

But naturally endowed with poetical powers as he was, sometimes his alliteration in prose produces an effect of humour which is not grotesque like the above, as for instance উত্তোগের সহিতই দুর্যোগের সাক্ষাৎ হইয়াছে and যাহাতে দশের সংযোগ তাহাতেই যশের সংযোগ (Typical Selections, Volume II, pp. 1811-1812).

I have already said that Carey and his European colleagues made Bengali prose flow once more into the channel of easy colloquial form understood by the people. His ‘Itihāsmālā’ and ‘Kathōpokathan’ show how far he was able to master the colloquial dialect.

If the Vernacular department of the Fort William College would not have been controlled by Dr. Carey,

it was quite possible that the great Mirtyunjaya Pundit would have continued to write in a strain which would make Bengali prose more difficult and abstruse than Kadambari and Harshacharit

have ever been in Sanskrit. The writers of Sanskrit had a common sense by which the dignity of their composition was preserved, but Bengali prose in the hands of Pundits was a fantastic thing, unintelligible, foolish and full of unmeaning vain pedantry.

In order to learn the dialect of Bengal Carey mixed with the people in the most intimate manner. He began the habit of chewing betel-leaves and in 1798 we find him singing Bengali songs near a Shiva temple. Many extracts from his prose writings have been given in my "Typical Selections from Bengali Literature," Vol. II, and I need not give more here. Carey was not only the perfect master of Bengali language but also taught the Hindusthani and Marathi languages in the Fort William College. His perfect command over the dialect of this country gave him really an elevated notion of its wealth and resources. He writes "This language current through an extent of country nearly equal to Great Britain when properly cultivated, will be inferior to none in elegance and perspecuity."

The works written by the Bengali colleagues of Carey are more or less dominated over by the Sanskrit element. But Ram Ram Vasu's *Pratāpādityācharit*, as has already been stated, was permeated by the influence of Persian. The Pundits of the Fort William College were therefore not very favourably disposed towards

the style of this book and we have already referred to hostile criticisms. Marshman praises the erudition of this Bengali writer but says that he was a whimsical and revengeful man. The fact is that Ram Vasu found it uncongenial to work in the Fort William College and resigned his post. Probably some wrong was done to him and he could not bear it. Marshman says that he never excused anybody if he did him wrong. Ram Vasu had shown the MS. of *Pratāpādityācharit* to his friend, the famous Rājā Rāmmohan Roy, who approved the book inspite of the predominance of Persian element in it. If the Persian element is allowed to prevail in excess, Bengali prose turns into a form like the following :—

“সাহাজাদি সখিসোনা সোনার মধ্য হইতে পয়দা হইবার বিবরণ উজিরনন্দনের মাণিক পয়দা হইবার বয়ান, বাদসাহ ও উজির ফয়জন্দের মুখ দেখিয়া খুসির মজলেছ করে এবং বড় পীরের দোয়ার মাণিক জিন্দা হয় ও দোবারা মালিনীর হাতে আফতে গিরিবার বয়ান।”

Index to *Sakhishona* by Mahamad Korbanali.

So we have seen that there were dangers in regard to our language placed in the hands of Sanskrit scholar, and no less when the Moulavi becomes its sponsor. For a brief period, the Pundit and Moulavi swayed its destiny and if European scholars like Carey and Marshman had not come forward to guide them, this elegant prose of ours would have been some

thing very different from that found in the present-day literature.

Carey and his European colleagues wrote manuals and treatises on various subjects in Bengali and these served to create an awakening in our national consciousness, giving extraordinary stimulus to the development of Bengali prose.

Another aspect of this matter is that if these European scholars had not showed the way, the prose literature of Bengal like her poetry would have been confined to religious and domestic subjects and never attained its present many-sidedness. These scholars wrote manuals of Geography, Arithmetic, Annals of Rome and Greece and History of the World on their own scientific lines. They were altogether novel subjects to the Bengali readers who applied themselves to the culture of these with enthusiastic eagerness. From geographical catechisms to arithmetical tables, there is no subject on which European scholars did not write books in the Vernacular of this province. The list given by the Rev. J. Long comprises historical, biographical, ethical, moral and agricultural subjects, besides it deals with arithmetic, lexicography, grammar, geography, mensuration, natural philosophy, art of teaching, model letter-writers, and books on other subjects such as law, idioms, translations from works like Virgil's *Æneid*,

Shakspeare's *Tempest*, *Robinson Crusoe*, *Pilgrim's Progress*, Gladwin's pleasant stories,—all written by Europeans. The list furnished by the Rev. J. Long mentions 44 European writers of Bengali and about 100 books written by them in the Vernacular of Bengal.

Chief amongst these writers were of course Carey, Yates, Pearson, Felix Carey, Weanger, Haughton, Forster, and the Rev. J. Long himself. Dr. Carey was, of course, an indefatigable worker. There was no subject that did not interest him, and curiously, we find him writing a work on anatomy in Bengali—a stout volume of six hundred and thirty-eight pages. It was called 'Hārābalividya' and was published from Serampore Press in 1820. *May-Ganit* written by Mr. May published in 1817 remained a standard book for long for the use of Vernacular schools. 'Bhugal ebam Jyotish' by Pearson published in 1824, dealt with Geography and Astronomy and পদার্থ বিজ্ঞান or natural philosophy by Yates supplemented 'Bhugal and Jyotish' in the same year, *i.e.* 1824. And all these were taught in our Vernacular schools. The Europeans were therefore disseminating all this useful knowledge to our countrymen in their own Vernacular, till Bengali writers, instructed in the art, came forward to supplement their labour on the same lines. These subjects were latterly taken up and improved upon by Bengali writers, not so much

in respect of the subject matter as in regard to style, till this stupendous work of European writers undertaken for the purpose of spreading education in this country was forgotten, and now all these books are out of print and are to be rarely found. The Rev. J. Long's catalogue is now practically the sole refuge for us to fall back upon for gathering information on the subject.

Thus we see three kinds of influences upon our Vernacular prose up to the middle of the nineteenth century. The Pundit and the Moulovi by their heavy classical lexicography encumbered and vitiated the prose style practically rendering it beyond the grasp of common people. The European scholars tried to make our vernacular style simple, direct and to the point, so that the masses could be enlightened in modern science and literature. But unfortunately their ignorance of the idioms of our tongue and their inability to free their mind from the fetters of the syntactical forms of the English language made their Bengali so abstruse and difficult to understand, that though they confined themselves to simple words and short sentences, yet the peculiarities of English style imported into Bengali sounded strange to Bengali ears and became unintelligible to them in another way. - The feeling of odd humour which

The Pundit, the
Moulovi and the Euro-
pean scholar.

their defective idiom gives rise to, may be excused in a pious manner, but however greatly we may praise their devotion and philanthropy, their Bengali prose composition cannot always be admired by us. We beg to quote extracts from various European writers to show the sort of style they introduced imitating English syntax in Bengali prose. We are afraid, many of us will not be able to understand the original Bengali, but it is sure their English translation, which we subjoin to each passage, will greatly help in comprehending the original.

1. গোল্ডস্মিথ উপাধ্যায় কর্তৃক বিবরণীকৃত (Typical Selections, Vol. II, p. 1722) [First told by Goldsmith, the scholar].

2. অন্য এক প্রথিত প্রাজ্ঞোপাধ্যায় কর্তৃক বিবরণীকৃত ফিলিক্স কেরি কর্তৃক বাঙ্গালা ভাষায় কৃত শ্রীরামপুরে ছাপ হইল ইতি। সন ১৩১৯ (Typical Selections, p. 1722) [Translated into Bengali by another illustrious scholar, Felix Carey, and printed at the Serampore Press in 1819 A.D.]

3. সমস্ত দেশ জয় করণের পর যিনি ইংলণ্ডীয়েরদের মধ্যে প্রথমতঃ কোন উত্তম পদে নিযুক্ত ছিলেন এমন যে তামসবেকট নামে যিনি খ্যাতাপন্ন ছিলেন তিনি লণ্ডন নগরস্থ এক প্রজার সন্তান ছিলেন।

(Typical Selections, Volume II, p. 1723) [The man who occupied a really high position after the conquest, was one Thomas a Becket,

This celebrated man was the son of an ordinary citizen of London.]

4. পরে ঐ ব্যক্তি চিরকালীয় রাজপদ ভিন্ন অদ্বিতীয় উচ্চ পদ প্রাপ্ত হইয়া পূর্ববাবস্থার হেয় কৰ্ম্ম সকল গোপন করণার্থে ভণ্ড তপস্বীর ন্যায় আচরণ করিতে লাগিলেন।” (Typical Selections, Vol. II, p. 1723.) [This man who now occupied a place next in rank to that of the permanent sovereign, began to pose as a saint in order to hide the acts of his former low condition.]

5. ‘বুঝা যায় যে ঐ সময়ে ঐ সকল যে সভা একত্র হইয়াছিল তাহা ভাবি পুরুষের হিতোপদেশের ব্যবস্থা করণার্থে নয়। কিন্তু অধিক আপনার প্রভুত্বের নিমিত্তি।” (Typical Selections, Vol. II, p. 1724.) [It is understood that the meetings which were called then, had for their object the self-aggrandisement of the king, and not the welfare of the future generation.]

6. “প্রথমেতে কিছু বক্র ছিলেন যে বেকেট তিনিও শেষে স্বাক্ষর করিলেন।” [Becket who had been a little hostile in the beginning, now also signed.]

7. যিনি ইতর লোকের ব্যবস্থা দ্বারা দোষী হইয়া ক্রুশেতে হত হইলেন এমন যে খ্রীষ্ট তত্তুল্য আপনাকে করিলেন।” (T.S., Vol. II, p. 1725.) [He thought that he was equal to Christ, who was crucified because the vulgar people condemned him as a criminal.]

8. কিন্তু একজন আর এক জনের সর্ব্ব প্রথমে কহিতে যে লাভের হানি ইহাতে ঐ বাঞ্ছিত ঐক্য করণে বহুকাল বিলম্ব হইল। (T.S., Vol. II, p. 1725.) [But one did not like to approach the other first fearing that it would lower his prestige, so the much-desired truce was delayed.]

9. সে ব্যক্তি যাবজ্জীবন হেনরিকে ত্যক্ত করিয়া নিত্য তচ্ছাসনোল্লঙ্ঘক হইল যে ঐ মহাধর্ম্মাচার্য্য বেকেট তাহার প্রতি হেনরির অত্যন্ত ক্রোধ প্রজ্জ্বলিত হইল। (T. S., Vol. II, p. 1726). [The Archbishop Becket who had ever annoyed Henry by violating his orders, now kindled a spirit of revenge in His Majesty.]

10. “শক্তি পর্য্যন্ত রক্তস্রাবি মনোবাঞ্ছা পূর্ণকরণার্থে।” (T. S., Vol. II, p. 1727.) [To fulfil their bloody desire to the utmost of their power.]

11. “ঐ বেদী তাঁহার রক্তেতে এবং মজ্জাতে বিচিত্রিতা হইল।” (T. S., Vol. II, p. 1727.) [The pulpit was spotted by his blood and marrow.]

12. “তিনি সকল কর্ম্মে এই মত যথার্থিক ছিলেন যে তিনি যথার্থের উপাধিতে খ্যাত হইলেন।” (Anecdotes of Virtue and Valour, Part I, p. 5, Ed. 1829.) [He was equitable in all things hence he was honoured with the surname of “the just”]

13. বিপক্ষ আরিষ্টিডসের বিষয়ে যত তিরস্কার বাক্য কহিয়াছিলেন তাহার প্রসঙ্গ করিতে লাগিল।” (P. 7) [One of them repeated all the injurious language which his adversary had used respecting Arisuides] (p. 6.)

14. আরিষ্টিডসের নিকটে এক জন কবির মোকদ্দমা উপস্থিত ছিল কবি তাঁহাকে আপন পক্ষে ব্যবস্থা কিছু হেলাইয়া দিতে মিনতি করিল।” (p. 9). [A poet having a case before Aristides entreated him to stretch a point in his favour.] (p. 8).

15. এই পদের উপলক্ষে সকল উন্মান ও পরিমাণের তদারক করণার্থে সে সকল হাট সন্দর্শন করিতে গেল।” (p. 22-23). [“He visited the markets and inspected the weights and measures”] (pp. 21-22)

16. “সাহসেতে খ্যাত জেনারেল মেডোস শ্রীরঙ্গপটনের নিকটে যুদ্ধ বিষয়ে অনুসন্ধানার্থে এক দিন ভ্রমণ করিতে-ছিলেন।” (p. 51). [“General Madows, who was renowned for his valour, being out on a reconnoitring party near Seringapatam”] (p. 50).

17. “তিনি হাস্য করিয়া কহিলেন যে আমি আপনার কু-শ্রীক বদনে গুনাহগারী দিতেছি।” (p. 187). [He replied with a smiling countenance, that he was paying the penalty for his unfortunate countenance] (p. 186).

18. “টেপুস্থলতানের অধিকারের নাভিদেশ পর্য্যন্ত যাত্রা করিতে লর্ড কর্ণওয়ালিস সাহেব নিশ্চয় করেন।” (Bharat Barsher Itihas by John Marshman Ed. 1831, p. 8). [Lord Cornwallis determined to travel up to the very central part of Tipu’s jurisdiction.]

19. “অত্যনিচ্ছা পূর্বক আপনাদের স্বীয় স্বীয় কর্ম্ম স্থগিত করিল। (p. 85) [Owing to their great unwillingness they stopped all work.]

20. যে মহানুভব লোকেরদের যুদ্ধে বীর্য্য প্রকাশ যেমন এক গুণ তেমন কৃতকার্য্য হওন সময়ে সমভাবে থাকাও এক গুণ। (Bharat Barsher Itihas, Ed. 1831, p. 85.) [Brave people display their valour in the field but they preserve a perfect equanimity of mind at the time of peace. Both these qualities prove his greatness.]

21. “অপর পোলীসের বিষয়ে লর্ড কর্ণওয়ালিস সাহেব অনেক গুরুতর মতান্তর করিলেন।” (p 103). [Lord Cornwallis introduced a great reformation, while organising the Police.]

22. “এই ক্ষণে আপা সাহেবের বিষয়ের বিবরণ প্রস্তাব্য।” (Bharat Barsher Itihas, Ed. in 1831, p. 358.)

[Now it is time to give an account of Appa Saheb.]

So we see that none of these three influences, *viz.*, of the Pundit, the Moulavi and of the European, on the formation of the Bengali style, was faultless or above blame, inspite of the whole-hearted devotion and assiduity with which the writers worked in the field.

The influence of the Moulavi is now on the wane and we need not comment on decaying culture.

The Pandit's labours in the field of Bengali letters, however uncouth they might have been in the earlier stages, were gradually toned down, and became latterly productive of a superbly beautiful though simple classic style. In this the Sanskrit element manifested itself in the purity of diction and its elegant expressions without affecting the graceful original frame-work of Prakrit speech from which the modern Bengali has evolved. Vidyāsāgar has shewn us how the Bengali language may retain its Prakrit simplicity and form and yet so perfectly assimilate the Sanskritic element that the relation between Sanskrit and a Sanskritic language could be rightly established to the great advantage of the latter.

To English writers our debt is immense inspite of the many defects in their writings which will be apparent from a perusal of the passages quoted

by me. The influence of the English tongue on our prose became gradually manifest in its vigorous and racy style. But this influence is not now too obvious, though we certainly owe to English influence a good deal of the vigour of our modern prose. Occasionally it gives an exotic flavour to our style which heightens its charm by many a poetical turn of expressions.

Though we find the Bengali style of some of the English writers defective and full of humorous instances of failures, yet it must be admitted that there were many exceptions to the rule. As we have already shewn, Carey's colloquies and stories in Bengali were almost faultless, judging by the standard of the contemporary Bengali prose of Bengali writers themselves. It is true that on account of the great advantage that he derived from his constant intercourse with some of the great Bengali scholars of the Fort William College, he could get his compositions revised and corrected by them, yet it is a great credit that his Bengali idioms, generally speaking, did not savour of those of English. He had certainly mastered Bengali in a wonderful degree. The Bengali prose of Marshman does him a great credit. We cannot expect that at this distance of time his style would fully answer the modern standard. There was certainly a currency of those words and idioms in our tongue which have grown

obsolete at the present day. But overlooking such peculiarities and antiquated forms, we should admit that the style of Marshman shows a vigour and racy sweep which are really remarkable for a scholar acquiring a foreign tongue. He writes a simple style but he is never undignified. In his writings there are no outlandish mannerisms. The construction of the style has almost a classical dignity which latterly developed in such a marvellous manner in Vidyāsāgar's prose, though the graceful simplicity remained still the chief feature of that style. Here is an extract from Marshman's History of India published from Serampore in the year 1831. All the more credit is due to the writer for his retaining a Bengali tone in his style as this book is a translation from English.

“জেনারেল মন্রো সাহেব ৯ঐ মে তারিখে শোলাপুরে পৌছিয়া দেখেন বাজিরাওর অবশিষ্ট পদাতিকেরা এগারটা তোপ লইয়া সেই স্থলে শিবির স্থাপন পূর্বক রহিয়াছেন, এবং আরবীয় সৈন্তরা তৎকালে শোলাপুরের কিল্লা রক্ষার্থ নিযুক্ত আছে। মন্রো সাহেবের ঐ স্থান বেষ্ঠনের কিঞ্চিৎ পরে বিপক্ষীয় পদাতিকেরা অতি সঙ্কোপনে স্থানান্তর হইতে উদ্যোগ করিল, তাহাতে জেনারেল মন্রো সাহেব সাত শত অশ্বরোহী সমভিব্যাহার দিয়া জেনারেল প্রিটসেলার সাহেবকে তাহা-দিগকে সংহার করিবার নিমিত্ত প্রেরণ করিলেন।” (Marshman's History of India, p. 341.)

[General Monro, having arrived at Solapore, found that the remaining foot soldiers of Baji Rao had encamped there with eleven guns. The

Arabian soldiers he found engaged in defending the Solapore Fort. A short while after Monro had besieged the Fort, the foot-soldiers of the enemies tried to remove themselves elsewhere very privately. But Monro sent General Pritsaler with a cavalry seven hundred strong in order to overtake and annihilate them.]

The prose literature on historical and scientific subjects, in the composition of which European writers had played the pioneer's part, aroused great literary activities amongst

The intellectual
activities of the
Bengalis roused.

the Bengalis. And men like the Rev K. M. Banerjee and Dr. Rajendralal Mitra latterly achieved celebrity in this field. In the year 1851 Rajendralal Mitra published his "Bibidhārtha Sangraha" and the Rev K. M. Banerjee started his "Vidyākālpadrūma" (Encyclopædia Bengalances). These two works popularised scientific and historical knowledge amongst our countrymen and their style was characterised by the faults and merits of the European writers whose example they followed. Innumerable writers in Bengal now came forward to write books on various subjects and we need not deal with their writings here. They have all shown, more or less, the turns of phrases and idioms, the inflections of verb and the syntax, peculiar to this age and on which we have already commented. Rāmkaṃal Sen, the grandfather

of the illustrious Kesab chandra Sen compiled a dictionary of 1534 pages in which he gave meanings of 5300 English words. There were many historical treatises amongst which, 'Banglar Itihas' by Iswarchandra should be specially mentioned. This book was written in 1849 and in the same year the book was translated into English by Major G. T. Marshall. In this year also Ishwarchandra published his "Jibana-charit" in which he gave short sketches of Copernicus Galileo, Newton, Herschell, Grotius, Linnæus, Duval, Thomas Jenkins and Sir William Jones. He introduced a more refined style than hitherto in vogue and at once brought himself to a place of eminence. The prose of this period was considerably developed by the enthusiastic zeal of the contending parties in the field of social reformation. They wrote many books forcibly preaching their propaganda often with volleys of abuses flung against each other. The language of these books, though occasionally full of slang and flat humour, was sometimes wonderfully racy and vigorous, and this gave a great impetus to the public who took part in the animated discussions all round. Prose literature spread amongst the masses in this way. We find one Gourmohan Dey publishing a work in Bengali called "Stri Siksabisāok" as early as 1818. The language is simple and the tone quite calm. He defends female education quoting

a large number of examples not only from pre-historic India but also from modern history and mentions Vidyālakṣa who gave lectures at Benares in the eighteenth century in Sanskrit on the Hindu scriptures, one Sundari of Faridpur whose knowledge of Logic was much admired, and Ahallyabai who could converse in Sanskrit as fluently as in her mother tongue. In 1840, came a fierce attack upon this treatise in the language of unrestrained ire from an anonymous writer in a work called "Stridurācār." In 1846 was published the "Kāyastha kiran" in which the writer advances claims on the authority of the scriptures to a higher social status for the Kāyāsthas. This was opposed by "Muktābālī," a pamphlet written by Kālikānta Bhattacharya, who wrote it at the instigation of Rājā Nārāyan of Andul, himself a Kayastha, and in this book, the writer proved that the claims of the Kayasthas were mere pretensions. From the "Dikdarsan," published by the Serampore Missionaries in 1818,

and the 'Kaumadi' by Rājā Rāmmohan Roy (1819) to 'Timirdarsan' by Kṛṣṇamohan

The literature of controversy and abuse.

Ray published in 1823, a large though ephemeral literature came to existence, propounding revolutionary ideas in social and religious matters. The advocates of liberal ideas shewed an extraordinary enthusiasm in denouncing orthodoxy. This coupled with the drastic

measures which the young Bengal were taking to upset the cherished ideals of the country, and the daily growing tendency amongst them to abandon their faith in Hinduism and adopt Christianity, aroused a hostile atmosphere all around inspiring the orthodox community to take up the task of opposing the movement of reformation as it were with a vengeance. Many magazines and journals were started by the members of the orthodox community and there were acrimonious attacks on the reforms in them in a language which was mostly of a colloquial nature though occasionally encumbered by the classical element. The most noteworthy of these in the first quarter of the nineteenth century was the 'Chandrika' started in 1821. The Rev. J. Long calls this paper the 'Times of Calcutta' which exercised great influence on the Hindu community for many years, and Marshman in his history of Serampore calls it 'The great bulwork of the current superstitions.' He is, however, enamoured of the charm of "Chandrika's pure and simple style," Bhabanicharan, the editor, was a great pro-suttee champion and became so famous as a leader of public opinion in Bengal that his biography, written a short while before his death, became a very popular treatise. The "Durjan Daman Nabami" by Thakur Das Bose (1846), "Hindu Dharma Chandrodoy" (1847) and 'Rasa

Mudgara' by Kshetramohan Banerjee were also the organs of the orthodox society remarkable at the time for the brilliancy of their style.

But these were all outshone by the '*Sambad Pravakara*' started in March, 1830 by Iswar-chandra Gupta who, about this time, was the most conspicuous amongst Bengali writers. The serio-comic writings of Iswarchandra and his scathing attacks on Gaur Sankar Bhattacharya, editor of the '*Rasarāj*' were at one time enjoyed most by our people, though the attacks and volleys of abuses levelled by the two writers against one another were characterised by a style full of the grossest scurrilities. They were of such a revolting type that the Rev. Long found it necessary to move the government to stop such writings by enacting law. We have already noticed that Iswar Gupta's prose is full of conceits and alliterations. His prose sometimes verges on the poetical. It is on such occasions neither prose nor poetry but a hybrid and medley of a curious kind—much like the figure of the god Ganesh whose human body and elephant's head shew a grotesque combination. We have already cited an example of such style on p. 81. We wonder how this prose could be accepted as the standard of composition in those days! Occasionally Iswar Gupta bursts into exclamations in which also he retains the consciousness of excelling by conceits and

imitations of Sanskrit rhetoric. While praising the old Bengali poems in a passage, he tries to be eloquent and expresses himself in this strain:—

“শব্দের কি লালিত্য মধুরত্ব ! ভাবের কি মাধুর্য্য সৌন্দর্য্য !
রসের কি তাৎপর্য্য ! আশ্চর্য্য আশ্চর্য্য ! কোন পক্ষেই অপ্রাচর্য্য
দেখিতে পাই না ।”

The reader will see that he was more actuated by a motive to repeat the compound letter ‘র্য’ in as many words as he could, than by any adulatory spirit for his subject which seems apparently to inspire him. His prose style once greatly influenced the speeches of the heroes of the old Yatras. Here is an extract which will remind the reader of the familiar speechifyings of the Yatra-heroes that now supply a source of inexhaustible mirth and humour to most of us “কোন কোন ধনী সাহায্য করণে অঙ্গীকৃত হইয়াছিলেন কিন্তু অধুনা সেই সেই ধনীর সেই সেই ধ্বনি শরৎ কালের মেঘের ধ্বনির আয় মিথ্যা হইবে ।” Iswar Gupta’s style, at one time held as model which even Bankim Chandra admired and tried to imitate in his younger days, has now grown thoroughly antiquated.

In the controversial literature where abuses went on without any regard for decency, we find Rādhākānta Deb of Sobha Bazar standing as the champion of Hinduism and not only financing the organs of the orthodox community but helping the cause by his literary contributions. He

Rādhākānta Dev.

compiled the great Sanskrit Encyclopædia, the *Sabdakalpadruma*, and was the pivot around which the writers of the Hindu society of that age moved, holding up the banner of orthodoxy. One of the young poets of great promise, Dwarkanath Adhikari, who was cut off by premature death, wrote the following eulogium of the Rājā in the ‘Sambad Prabhakar.’

“আপন গুণের বলে, যে রেখেছে করতলে এ দেশীয় হিন্দুর সমাজ।

যাঁহার বিদ্যার তরে, সবে মহাসমাদরে, উপাধি দিয়েছে দেবরাজ।”

[One who by his noble virtues is the undisputed leader of the Hindu society and one whom the country has honoured by conferring on him the title of ‘Devarāj,’ in acknowledgment of his great scholarship.] The Rev. K. M. Banerjee called this illustrious social leader “Gadhakanta.” —“the Prince of asses.” This was the way in which the two contending parties used to abuse each other in those days.

CHAPTER IV

RĀJĀ RĀMMOHAN AND HIS SCHOOL

Far above this turmoil and atmosphere of vilification and abuses was heard the quiet but commanding voice of Rājā Rāmmohan Roy. He too was a propagandist, and his love for the doctrines he preached was not a whit less than that of the party-leaders who abused each other. Look at the contrast. His prose writings which commenced from 1815, when he wrote his "Vedāntasār," comprising a considerable literature on a variety of subjects, are all characterised by a sobriety and calmness which marked a new school of sound culture and wholesome spirit of literary and religious discussion in which a perfect equanimity of temper was preserved at least on one side. But he had to meet vulgar attacks also. He, however, listened to the great abuse flung against him from all sides by half-lettered members of the orthodox community, and was supremely indifferent. Just as a father persists in his beneficent course to bring the erring child round inspite of his frettings, so did the Rājā deal with his abusers. He did not abuse in return of the abuse he received,

but noted every point of it and tried to bring conviction to the mind of the abuser by gentle persuasions in which reason played the essential part. If any one of the opposite party said, "Was not there any other man as wise as the Rājā to know all this? Is he the wisest man?" The Rājā would reply "Even long before me, Sanatkumār, Veda Vyās and Janaka had preached this, no—I am not the first?" Even the most frivolous thing spoken which any other man would meet with an indignant retort or at best pass over with a sneer, elicited a quiet reply from him in which his anxiety to convince was the most prominent feature. He was a man of stupendous learning—one who was perhaps unrivalled in the world of his times as a linguist, but the most wonderful thing about him was that though his reasoning ran through all his discourses, he seemed to attach even a greater importance to authority; so that when the leader of a party held disputations with him, he overpowered him by quotations from and interpretations of the original texts of his opponent's scriptures. The Moulavi was surprised to find him a superior interpreter of the original texts of the Korān and the Christian missionary found it hard to defend himself when the Rājā pointed out his errors by citing the original Hebrew or Greek texts. To the masses of Bengal he came

as an ideal teacher whose temper was never lost—as a saintly philanthropist who cared only for the good of the ignorant men and women of this country and tried to convince them by quiet persuasion and love. The prose style of this remarkable man, though slightly affected by the influence of English, was curiously very similar to that of ‘Jnanādi sādhanā’ of the Sahajīā writer. If the reader will see pp. 1631 and pp. 1753 of my Typical Selections Vol. II, he will be able to judge for himself the truth of my remarks. I quote an extract from the Rājā’s Brahmavidyā to show the sort of style that the Rājā adopted for explaining the scriptures. It is not at all pedantic, and the classical element, though the Rājā was a superior Sanskrit scholar, is altogether absent. He never puts a word which he may avoid, and his epigrammatic sentences always prove his points to satisfaction. This style of expounding religious and social views—without enthusiasm, without abuse and without any affectation or mannerism—characterises the school founded by him. And the ‘Tattwabodhini patrika’ the organ of the Ādisamāj, tried to conform to the style of the master’s writings, while dealing with social and religious problems. I do not say that Rājā Rāmmohan Roy is the father of the modern Bengali prose, as some people have said, nor do I take him to have written in a style which by its literary excellence

and intrinsic merit ranks him as the foremost of the writers of Bengal in the modern times. But I must admit that he was greater than a literary man ; he was an ideal teacher and saint. He used language as a vehicle of thought and did not care to decorate it ; for the decorating of style often diverts the mind from the subject to literary beauty. He was charged with a mission which he was to communicate to the world with the utmost haste and he delivered the same in a style most suited for his purpose. His writings are pure and blameless, and in this respect he stands superior to Carey. The literary atmosphere around him, charged with abuses, and imitations of the classic or poetic mannerisms did not at all influence him. His position is a unique one in the annals of our literature for he conveys his message to our countrymen—much as the prophet does his Gospel. He follows close reasons with a brevity, cool-headedness and perspicuity and a quiet persuasive appeal which are almost irresistible by reason of their simplicity and candour. He wrote a style the echo of which we find in “Debandranath’s Atmasharit” in a later age. The words chosen by him are generally those which are daily spoken even by our illiterate people. And when explaining the most abstruse and philosophical portion of the scripture, he seldom takes recourse to pompous classical expressions.

RAMMOHAN RAY'S PROSE STYLE.

“কেহো কেহো এ শাস্ত্রে প্রবৃত্তি হইবার উৎসাহের তঙ্গ নিমিত্ত কহেন যে বেদের বিবরণ ভাষায় করাতে এবং শুনাতে পাপ আছে। এবং শূদ্রের এ ভাষা শুনিলে পাতক হয়। তাহাদিগে জিজ্ঞাসা কর্তব্য যে যখন তাহারা শ্রুতি স্মৃতি জৈমিনিসূত্র গীতা পুরাণ ইত্যাদি শাস্ত্র ছাত্রকে পাঠ করান তখন তাহারা ভাষাতে তাহার বিবরণ করিয়া থাকেন কি না ছাত্রেরা সেই বিবরণকে শুনেন কি না আর মহাভারত যাহাকে পঞ্চম বেদ আর সাক্ষাৎ বেদার্থ কহা যায় তাহার শ্লোক সকল শূদ্রের নিকট পাঠ করেন কিনা এবং তাহার অর্থ শূদ্রকে বুঝান কিনা। শূদ্রেরা ও সেই বেদার্থের অর্থ এবং ইতিহাস পরম্পর আলাপেতে করিয়া থাকেন কিনা আর শ্রাদ্ধাদিতে শূদ্র নিকটে ঐ সকল উচ্চারণ করেন কি না। যদি এইরূপ সর্বদা করিয়া থাকেন তবে বেদান্তের এ অর্থের বিবরণ ভাষাতে করিবাতে দোষের উল্লেখ কিরূপে করিতে পারেন।

[“There are some who try to damp our spirit in our attempts to disseminate a knowledge of scriptures amongst the masses, by declaring that it is a sin to translate the Vedic lore into Bengali and make it accessible to lower castes. They assert that the Sudras become great sinners by hearing the sacred lore. We have some questions to ask to these men. Do they not explain the Upanishads, the Gita, the theology of Jaimini and other scriptures in Bengali to their students? Do not the students listen to these explanations given in Bengali with all attention? The Mahabharata is known as the fifth Veda,—it is surely the very essence of the Vedic lore. Do not these pundits recite the *slokas* of the

Mahabharata before the Sudras? And do they not also explain these *slokas* to the Sudras in Bengali? Do not the Sudras talk amongst themselves about the meanings of the Vedic *slokas* as explained to them and about the history of their origin? Do not the learned pundits read aloud scriptures and recite sacred *mantras* before the Sudras during the *sraddha* ceremonies?

“If these pundits can do all these things, with what consistency can they find fault with me for explaining the Upanishads in Bengali?”]

It is seen from the above extract that the Raja was anxious to prove the inconsistency of action on the part of the Pundits by direct home-thrusts. Any other man would have urged that there should be no difference between man and man and that the Brahmins and the Sudras were all children of God and as such all invidious distinctions observed by society were mere superstitions. But the Raja did not urge upon points which were hackneyed and commonplace. He shewed on the other hand that the Brahmins as a matter of fact did not themselves observe the rules which they wanted others to follow, and therefore had no justification for abusing others who trod the path already trodden by them. The language of the above extract is clear, simple and forcible though archaic, its chief feature being that it is not at all influenced by Sanskrit, though Sanskrit and Vedic scriptures are the subject of the Raja's treatment.

The resuscitation of the model which characterised the prose of pre-English days,—and the characteristics of which we find in the works of Rādhāvallabha Sarmā, who had at a previous period translated works of Hindu Jurisprudence, and in the writings of ‘Sahajā Vaisnavas,’—was brought about by the Rājā with a vigour of expression which marked his prose with a stamp of his superior genius. This style, as I have said, was imitated by the Tattabodhini *patrikā*.

But the Ādi-samāj was not the only place where the Rājā’s style found favour. In 1836 Lakṣminārāyaṇ Nyayalankār, one of the foremost Sanskrit scholars of the day, and a son of Gadha-dhar Tarkabagis Bhattacharya, compiled a work of Jurisprudence called the ‘Byabastha Ratna-

Lakṣminarayan’s
“Byabastha Ratna-
mala.”

mala’ (Lit., a garland of the jewels of Jurisprudence). The compiler of this book states

that he consulted all the works of Jurisprudence which were found in the library of the East India Company and that he brought also a large number of classical works on the subject from the Mukti-mondap of Puri and consulted various other sources for compiling his work. He besides says that he showed his MS. to all the Pundits of the Sanskrit College and also to “The Hon’ble Dr. Wilson, versed in all the scriptures and peerless as a scholar.” Lakṣminarayan was the Librarian of the Sanskrit

College and had, previous to this work, written a compendium from Yajnavalkya. This was published in 1824. He had about this time also translated the Hitopadesh into Bengali. The style of 'Byabastha Ratnamala' is a close imitation of that of the old Bengali prose to which we have already made a reference. In purity and perspicuity it will not suffer by a comparison with the Rājā's writings. This author states that the book was so highly appreciated by the professors of the Sanskrit college that they gave him a certificate testifying to his superior literary powers, signed by all of them. I give below an extract from the preface to 'Byabastha Ratnamala' which will shew the unassuming and simple grace of Laksminarayan's prose :—

ব্যবস্থারত্নমালার ভূমিকা ।

“ভারতবর্ষের মধ্যে ব্রাহ্মণাদি যাবদ্বর্ণ ও বর্ণসঙ্কর আপন আপন ধর্ম প্রতিপালন করত বাস করিতেছেন তাহাদিগের আচার ও ব্যবহার এবং প্রায়শ্চিত্ত নির্বাহের নিমিত্তে মনু ও অত্রি ও বিষ্ণু ও হারীত ও যাজ্ঞবল্ক্য ও উশনা ও অঙ্গিরা ও যম ও আপস্তম্ব ও সম্বর্ত্ত ও কাত্যায়ন ও বৃহস্পতি ও পরাশর ও ব্যাস ও শঙ্কর ও লিখিত ও দক্ষ ও গৌতম ও শাতাতপ ও বশিষ্ঠ ও মরীচ ও দেবল ও নারদ প্রভৃতি ধর্ম শাস্ত্র বক্তা অনেকঋষি সংহিতা করিয়াছেন ।*

* The use of “ও” after the name of each of the saints mentioned in lines 3—6 may appear somewhat queer. But in those days when punctuation-signs were not yet introduced in Bengali, this “ও” was found indispensable. If the names of saints were not separated by this “ও,” they would look as one long sentence strung together by *sandhi*.

“তাহাতে কোন কোন স্থলে মুনিরদিগের মতের বিভিন্নতা আছে তাহা যে যে ঋষির শাখার যে যে ব্রাহ্মণ তাহারাই প্রতিপালন করিয়াছেন এবং তাহারদিগের শিষ্য ও যজমান যে যে ক্ষত্রিয়াদি তাহারাও সেই সেই মত অবলম্বন করিয়াছেন।

“তাহার পর সেই সেই বংশে যাহারা আচার্য্য হইয়াছিলেন তাহারা ঐ সকল মুনি বচন প্রমাণ দিয়া অন্য অন্য মুনি বচনের তদনুযায়ী অর্থ করিয়া পৃথক পৃথক স্মৃতি সংগ্রহ করিয়াছিলেন। সেই সকল স্মৃতি শাস্ত্র তত্তদেশীয় রাজার সহায়তায় প্রচলিত হইয়াছে তার মধ্যে বিজ্ঞানেশ্বরীচার্য্য-কৃত যাজ্ঞবল্ক্য সংহিতার ব্যাখ্যা মিতাক্ষরা নামে যে ধর্ম্ম শাস্ত্র সেই অত্যন্তম সর্বত্র হিন্দুস্থানে মান্যরূপে প্রচলিত হইতেছে।

“তাহার পর এতদ্দেশে জীমূতবাহন নামা এক মহোপাধ্যায় হইয়াছিলেন তিনি ধর্ম্মবদ্ভ নামক এক স্মৃতি-সংগ্রহ করিয়াছেন তাহার ব্যবহারের একদেশ দায়ভাগ মাত্র এ দেশে আছে আর পাওয়া যায় না।

“সংপ্রতি এই দায়ভাগ উড়িষ্যা অবধি বেহারের পূর্ব্ব আশাম এবং মেকলির পশ্চিম আর ভোটার্নের দক্ষিণ ও সমুদ্রের কিঞ্চিৎ উত্তর এইরূপ চতুঃসীমাবচ্ছিন্ন পূর্ব্ব পশ্চিমে কিঞ্চিৎ ন্যূন বা অধিক ২০০ ছই শত ক্রোশ আর দক্ষিণোত্তর অনুমান সার্ব্বৈক শত ক্রোশ ১৫০ পর্য্যন্ত বাঙ্গালা দেশ।

“ইহার মধ্যে রাঢ় ও গোড় ও পোণ্ডু এবং বরেন্দ্র প্রভৃতি অনেক দেশ ভেদবোধক সংজ্ঞা আছে কিন্তু এসকল বঙ্গদেশের অন্তঃপাতী ইহাতে ঐ দায়ভাগ মান্যরূপে প্রচলিত আছে এবং ঐ মিতাক্ষরার সহিত যে যে ব্যবস্থার ঐক্য হয় তাহা অন্য দেশেও চলে।

“তাহার পর অনেক পণ্ডিত এই দুই গ্রন্থের তাৎপর্য্য গ্রহণ করিয়া পৃথক্ পৃথক্ সংস্কৃত রচনা দ্বারা অনেক সংগ্রহ করিয়াছেন কিন্তু তাহাতে বালকের ও অপণ্ডিত লোকের বিচার কিম্বা বিচার কর্ত্তা রাজারদিগের কোন উপকার হয় না অর্থাৎ পণ্ডিত ব্যতীত অন্য লোক তাহা হইতে ব্যবস্থা দিতে পারে না।

“অতএব আমি ঐ পূর্বোক্ত ছই গ্রন্থের প্রসিদ্ধ ও অপ্রচলিত যত ব্যবস্থা আছে তাহা সংগ্রহ করিয়া প্রশ্নোত্তর প্রমাণ পৃথক করিয়া ব্যবস্থারত্নমালা নামে এক গ্রন্থ প্রস্তুত করিয়াছি তাহার এই রীতি অদ্য প্রাপ্ত তাবৎ মধ্যে মধ্যে যে যে স্থানে মিতাক্ষরাকারের অথ জীমূতবাহনের মতের বৈলক্ষণ্য সেই সেই ব্যবস্থার প্রশ্নোত্তরে সেই সেই শাস্ত্রের নামোল্লেখ আছে ।

* * * * *

“এই গ্রন্থ প্রস্তুত করণ কালীন এই সকল প্রমাণের দৃঢ়তার নিমিত্তে এবং অধিক প্রমাণ লাভের নিমিত্তে কোম্পানির পাঠশালায় যত মুনিরদিগের সংহিতা ছিল তাহা আমি দেখিয়াছিলাম এবং এস্থানে যে যে সংহিতা নাই তাহা উৎকল দেশে পুরুষোত্তম ক্ষেত্রে মুক্তি মণ্ডপ হইতে আনাইয়া এ সকল প্রমাণের সহিত ঐক্য করিয়া যাহা অধিক পাইয়াছি এবং ইহার সহিত অর্থের ঐক্যতা আছে তাহা সংগ্রহ করিয়াছি সেই কালীন ঐ পরাশরের বচনের অনুসন্ধান করিলাম ঐ স্মৃতিতে সে বচন না পাইয়া মাধবাচার্য্য কৃত পরাশর ভাষ্যেতে দেখিলাম স্পষ্ট লিখন আছে রাজধর্ম্মের তিনটি বচন ব্যতীত কোন ব্যবহার পরাশর কহেন নাহি তাহা সংস্কৃত পাঠশালায় পণ্ডিতেরদিগকে এবং সর্ব্বশাস্ত্র বিশারদ মহামাত্য সর্ব্বোপমা-যোগ্য শ্রীযুক্ত ডাক্তার উইলসন্ সাহেবকে দেখাইয়া তাহার বৃত্তান্ত ইডুকেশন্ মুদ্রাযন্ত্রে দ্বিতীয় বার মুদ্রিত দায়ভাগের ২৭১ পৃষ্ঠে লিখিয়াছি ।”

This preface has been written twice, and there is a slight difference between the two versions.

[“For the guidance of the daily life and performance of penances of the four castes headed by the Brahmins and of the sub-castes, the Rishis of old—Manu, Vishnu, Harit, Yajñabalkya, Usana, Angirā, Jama, Apasthamba, Sambartha, Kātāyan, Brihaspati, Parāsara, Vyās, Sankha, Likhita, Dakṣa, Gautam, Satātapa, Basistha, Marichi

Devala and Narada have left us works on Jurisprudence.

“There are differences on certain points amongst the views of these sages. The adherents of each sect have followed the laws laid down by the Ṛṣi who had founded the sect, and transmitted his particular instructions through their disciples to posterity. So each particular school has been maintained up to this time. Then the great scholars who were born in a particular line professing the doctrines of a Ṛṣi compiled works in which their own laws were collected together with the views of the sages of different schools. But the scholars always tried to interpret these views in such a way as to support their own doctrines. These compilations were made the basis of the laws of a country by the help of the Rājā who ruled there. Amongst these the “Mitaksara” which embodies and interprets the Jurisprudence called the “Yajnavalkya Samhita” got currency over the whole of India and was considered to be the standard work. The ‘Mitaksara’ was compiled by Vijnān-āchārya.

“Next a great scholar was born in this country named Jimut Bahan. He compiled a work on Jurisprudence called the “Dharma samhita.” Of this work a part only, the Daibhag, is to be found here, the rest is not available.

“At the present day the Daibhag governs the country to the east of Behar and Orissa, west of Assam and Mekhli (Tippara) south of the Bhutan and a little north of the sea. The tract of land bounded in the aforesaid way comprises about four hundred miles to the east and west, and three hundred miles to north and south. Roughly speaking this is the boundary of Bengal.

“There are many divisions in this country such as the Radhadesh, Gaura, Paundra, and Bārendra. But all of these are comprised in Bengal where the Daibhag is held to be the standard work. Of course it should be said that the laws of this authority, where they conform to those laid down in the Mitaksara, are respected in other countries also.

“In later times many scholars came forward to compile catechisms of law by borrowing largely from the aforesaid two standard works. But these treatises being written in Sanskrit are inaccessible to laymen, and the rulers of the country also do not derive any benefit from them. For no one who is not a Sanskrit scholar is able to interpret the law as laid down in these smaller treatises of Jurisprudence.

“So I have compiled all the noteworthy laws and rules contained in the two works giving their purport by way of queries and answers and called it ‘Byabastha ratnamala.’ The special

feature of this work is that on those points where I find a difference between the Daibhag and Mitakshara, I have referred my readers to the original *slokas* from both the authorities.

“ When this book was in the process of preparation I consulted all the works on Jurisprudence preserved in the library of the East India Company in order to find further authority for the confirmation of the conclusions at which I have arrived, and also for getting a further light on the subjects treated by me. With this object in view, I got a loan of all works of Jurisprudence to be found in the Mukti Mandap of Puri. From these works I have collected such evidences as I could not get before and which have thrown a flood of light on the texts translated by me. The verse, in question, said to be written by Parāsar I tried to find out in these works but did not get. Then in the commentary on Parāsara by Madhabachārya I found it clearly mentioned that Parāsara had only three verses relating to the duties of a king and not one more on any other point. I showed the *sloka* to the Pundits of the Sanskrit College and to the Hon’ble Dr. Wilson of incomparable fame and versed in all scriptures. This I have mentioned on page 27 of the Daibhag printed at the Education Press ”].

It appears from the above that this great scholar Laksminarayan was appointed by the East

India Company to compile an authenticated work on Jurisprudence based primarily on the Daibhag and the Mitaksara. A manuscript of this book dated Saka 1773 (1851 A. D.) is in the library of the Calcutta University. It was collected last year at my directions by Abinashchandra Datta of Patrashaer, Dt. Birbhum.

CHAPTER V

VOCABULARY AND GRAMMAR

Before we enter upon the closing part of the epoch of our prose up to 1857, I shall here deal with the meanings of some words and phrases that have undergone a change since the beginning of the nineteenth century. It will be apparent that a process of correction has since been going on in our written Vernacular according to Sanskrit grammar and orthography.

In the *Prāchinpatra* (Typical Selections, Vol. II, p. 1673), পত্রাপত্রি গতায়ত=পত্র ব্যবহার (correspondence). In Carey's colloquies (T. S., Vol. II, p. 1679), we find use of স্ত্রমানুষের in the place of ভাল লোকের also the word নিকর used in the sense of নিশ্চয় and তাকাতাকি signifying তাড়াতাড়ি, *i. e.*, speedily. In *Pratāpāditya Charit* we find তদ্ব্যতিরেক for তদ্ব্যতীত (besides); the word বিশেষণ in the sense of 'virtue'—(তাহারদের বিশেষ বিশেষণ=their special virtues) সামুদায়িক=সমস্ত (all); সমিত্যারে=সমভিব্যাহারে; চিত্র বিচিত্র খেলাৎ=নানারূপ উপাধি ও পুরস্কার; সাতেক=সাথে (in the company of) পদার্পণ=নিযুক্ত হওয়া, as in মছরি গিরিতে পদার্পণ করিলেন; সম্ভ্রম=পুরস্কার (reward); একহৃদয়তা=এক-প্রাণতা (wholehearted devotion); অতি আয়েতে=অতি আয় সহকারে (justly); যুক্তে=সহযোগে (aided by, or in co-operation with); নিষ্পত্তি=উন্নতি; এ

কোন বস্তু তাহার সম্মুখে? = তাহার সম্মুখে এ কোন ছার? (What an insignificant thing is he, when compared with the Emperor?); নিভৃতি = নিভৃত (lonely); তাহার মন প্রকাশ হইল = সে ইচ্ছুক হইল, মতে = স্মৃতরাং or এইরূপ হইলে (This word is used as a conjunction joining a sentence when completed with another, and signifies the effect deduced from a cause. It is often used in the sense of 'স্মৃতরাং.' We have once noticed the various uses of the word in a previous lecture; বিচার = সংগ্রহ; সাজ নিঘোষণ = সজ্জা করিবার আদেশ; শীকার খেলিবার মতে = শীকার করিবার ছলে; নিগূঢ় বলিলেন = গোপনে বলিলেন (told privately); ছিন্ন = উদ্বিগ্ন; সমসজ্জমান = সজ্জিত; বোঝাইয়া = বোঝাই করিয়া; আচানৎ = অকস্মাৎ (suddenly) মাড়িপড়নেতে = মারা পড়াতে; বখিরা = the rest; তাহা কহনাধিক = বলা বাহুল্য; অস্পষ্ট = গুপ্ত; নাতি = কমতি; নিতান্ত বলিতে পারি না = নিশ্চিত বলিতে পারি না = যাবান ক্রমে = ফুরাইয়া গেলে; গুলগুলা = জনরব (rumour) সহসা কস্ম = আকস্মিক কার্য, here the word "সহসা" is used as an adjective and not as an adverb; বিলাপীয় = বিলাপ সূচক; গতি করাইলেন = সঙ্গে লইয়া গেলেন; the meaning of this phrase has since changed. It now means the performance of funeral rites when one is dead; উত্তরণের স্থান = বাসা-বাড়ী (the place where one lands and puts up on coming to a different country); নিরামত = অনুতাপ। In Krisnachandra Charit we find 'অগ্নিবৃষ্টি' = গোলা নিক্ষেপ; প্রণয় করিয়া = সখ্যতা স্থাপন করিয়া; পতন হইল = হত হইল। In the Prabodhchandrika by Mirtunjaya Tarkalankar we have স্বকীয় = স্বীয়;

as in স্বকীয় গো কে (his own cow), the word গো is used for গরু in Bengali ; সঙ্কুল=বিরুদ্ধ ; অনুদিন=প্রতিদিন ; তাৎপর্য=যত্ন ; মহাধ্যক্ষ=মহামন্ত্রী (Prime Minister) শিক্ষাকার=শিক্ষক (from p. 211) ; নিষকর্ষ=সিদ্ধান্ত (conclusion) স্বভিন্ন=নিজে ছাড়া।

Raja Rammohan Ray, as we have already noticed, used কিঞ্চিতে for কিঞ্চিৎ। The vowel “ও” is joined with the last letter of the word. He uses বিবেচনা (consideration) in the sense of আলোচনা (discussion). The word জন্ম and ভঙ্গ are used in the sense in which we now use উদ্ভব and লয় as ‘বিশ্বের জন্মস্থিতি ভঙ্গ’ ‘জগতের নির্বাহ’ চলিতেছে would in modern Bengali be জগৎ চলিতেছে or জগৎ নির্বাহিত হইতেছে. In the Itihāsmālā by Carey, we find ‘বিস্তর বিস্তর পর্যটন’ (Itihāsmālā by Carey, p. 239, Ed. 1812) in modern prose only one ‘বিস্তর’ would be allowable ; সুসঙ্গত (as in p. 239, Itihāsmālā, Ed. 1812) ‘এক চোর সেই টাকার সুসঙ্গত পাইয়া’ is used in the sense of report ; সুসঙ্গত পাইয়া=সুবিধাজনক সংবাদ. Occasionally queer forms of adjective is used in imitation of Sanskrit as in (Itihāsmālā p. 238, Ed. 1812). ‘হে স্ত্রীলোক তুমি নির্বোধ’। The word ‘শোভন’ is used in the sense of ‘প্রশংসনীয়’ (praise-worthy) as in Itihāsmālā by Carey, p. 242— “যে লোকের শোভন বুদ্ধি থাকে।” The European missionary who wrote ‘Sadgoon O Birjaya Itihas’ (Anecdotes of virtue and valour) published in 1829 from the Serampore Press puts যথার্থিক in the place of ‘upright’ as in তিনি

সকল কৰ্ম্মে এই মত যাথার্থিক ছিলেন (p. ৫) ‘প্রসঙ্গ করিতে লাগিলেন (p. J)=বর্ণন করিতে লাগিলেন। প্রাপনের লোভ (p. 13)=পাইবার লোভ।

Instances of such peculiar use of words and phrases that are now obsolete will be found profusely throughout the vast literature, produced mainly under the influence of European writers. I have only indicated a very few of them. My object is to direct the attention of students to this important source from which they can find considerable materials to build up a right Vocabulary and Grammar of the Bengali language and I can by no means undertake to give an exhaustive and complete list. Such a list alone would form a bigger volume than this treatise.

To another thing I beg to draw your attention. It is curious to observe that though most of these Bengali writers were great Sanskrit scholars, instances of spelling and grammatical errors lie strewn over the pages of their compositions. It is evident that they did not follow the standard of Sanskrit grammar too closely. In that case they could not commit so many bad mistakes which even a school-boy now would be ashamed of committing in his daily exercise. “Ram Ram Vasu,” writes Dr. Carey, “before his sixteenth year became a perfect master of Persian and Arabic. His knowledge of Sanskrit was not less worthy of note.” So this writer

was a great Sanskrit scholar. How can we account for the fact that he wrote অপকাশ for অবকাশ ; প্রবৃত্ত for প্রবৃত্ত ; কৰ্ত্ত্ব for কৰ্ত্ত্ব ; স্থৈৰ্য for স্থির ; নিরোপায় for নিরুপায় ; স্তম্ভ for সৈম্ভ ; ‘সবাক্ষবর্গের সহিত’ (prefix ‘স’ of the first word is a gross mistake) বিভ্রান্ত for বিভ্রান ; কাতরতা উক্তি for কাতর উক্তি ; অপামর for আপামর ; নিভৃতি for নিভৃত ; প্রিয়ত্তর for প্রিয়তম ? The whole book abounds with such instances of very common errors, and it is really difficult to understand how a man even with a smattering knowledge of Sanskrit could be charged with these. If Ram Vasu’s works would have come down to us in the form of an old MS. we would have doubtless fixed the blame of these grammatical and orthographical mistakes on the copyist, but in the present case we find no opportunity of saving the author from infamy and blame, for his works were published when he was living and the proofs were certainly corrected by him. Besides it is well-known that he had shewn the MS. of his book to the illustrious scholar Raja Rammohon Ray before publication. Carey, himself a Sanskrit scholar, writes শরব for স্বরূপ, and the great Pundit Mirtunjaya himself in the same breath writes ‘স্বকীয় গো’ and ‘স্বল্প ঘাস খাদিনী,’ the adjective স্বকীয় does not change though the second adjectival clause does to indicate the feminine form. We may, of course, excuse Felix Carey when he uses প্রবৃত্তি in the sense of প্রবৃত্ত as in

‘শকান্দের প্রবৃত্তি করিল’ Pramathanath, the writer of Bābubilās, writes “বাবু কিবা পাণ্ডিত্য” (T. S., Vol. II, p. 1739).

So we find that not only the writer of Pratapaditya Charit, who perhaps makes the greatest transgression in this respect, but all other writers of the age more or less commit grammatical and orthographical errors, though they were all great Sanskrit scholars and used the most pompous classical expressions as a proof of the same. It will certainly look anomalous. For in the writings of Bharatchandra Roy and even earlier writers such as Brindaban Das and Krisnadas Kaviraj, such mistakes are scarcely found. So we cannot say because a writer happens to take up Bengali for his composition, he becomes free from all fetters and is privileged to write any way he likes. We have the precedent of standard poetical works written in a much earlier period when the writers were careful and followed the canons of Sanskrit grammar as precisely as they could. The solution of this problem which we beg to offer is that, Bengali poetry, after Sanskrit Renaissance, was a field in which culture had begun as early as the middle of the fourteenth century. As most of the scholars wrote poetry, they all had to conform to the same standard rules, and deviation from them was not excused. Besides the Vaisnava writers had in their control almost the whole field of Bengali poetry at one

time, and one common standard was followed by all the writers under their influence. When, however, the developement of our prose-literature began early in the nineteenth century, it was almost an original soil untrodden by scholars, and the writers had no standard work before them for their guidance in composition. Under the new European influence they had given up the study of old poems. So while writing prose they followed the directions of the European sponsors and paid attention to the colloquial dialect, importing words from it without caring for their grammatical purity. Nor would the old poems, even if they had cared to read them, prove competent guides to them in their Vernacular writings, as they were mainly restricted to religious and domestic subjects. Here before the modern prose writers, however, was a vast field of varied literature, historical, scientific, theological, medical, and what not ! The writers had to coin words for technical purposes and take help from the dialect current around at every step ; and in doing so, they had little time to judge whether the words they used conformed to the rules of Sanskrit Grammar. They accepted them as they found them in the current language. For instance when a writer heard the word ‘अपकाश’ spoken a hundred times by his own people, he did not wait to remember that it was a corrupt form of

Sanskrit ‘অবকাশ.’ He trusted his ears and accepted the spoken speech as his guide. Even now we write many words which are faulty according to Sanskrit grammar, and which on account of familiarity, do not often strike us as corruptions of Sanskrit. But almost every year a large number of such words is being corrected by the purists, and if one takes a bird’s eye view of our progressive prose literature that has developed within the last quarter of a century, one will be surprised to find how we are eliminating the Persian element gradually from written literature and correcting the corrupt forms of Sanskritic words which in an earlier age were profusely in use. The purists of the present day have questioned the propriety of using the words ইতিমধ্যে, সক্ষম, অজানিত, নিমগ্ন, নিরপরাধী, কলঙ্কিনী, গোপিনী, পথমধ্যে, পথভ্রান্ত and স্বজন, and the position of these words of established status in our literature seems to be staggering.

The Sankritisation of Bengali has not stopped, but is continuing up to the present day, though

Sanskritisation of Bengali. a class of writers seems to be determined to use simple words of Prakrit origin in preference to high-sounding Sanskrit words. Colloquial forms are being thus preferred in some quarters, but it is curious to observe that when these very writers use Sanskrit or Sanskritic words, they do not

venture to give their spoken forms but follow the rules of Sanskrit grammar. No advocate of Prakritic forms would dare to use 'অপকাশ' for 'অবকাশ' and 'ক্ষেতি' for 'ক্ষতি' and 'পক্ষ' for 'স্পক্ষ' as we find Rām Vasu doing, though in many cases these words are even now used in their loose way in the spoken dialect.

So though some of our best writers are now advocates of simplicity, they are not being able to restore Bengali words to their pristine Prakrit forms. They dispense with the high-sounding Sanskrit words, but in their plain and simple prose the authority of Sanskrit Grammar has an undisputed sway. This process cannot be always condemned and it is not always to our disadvantage. If we had encouraged the continuity of the current words at every step the various forms current in different localities would stand in the way of the homogeneity of our language in its literary compositions. It must be also admitted that the Sanskritisation of Bengali establishes its superiority over all other Indian Vernaculars. The Pundits of different provinces of India would be able to comprehend a Bengali composition with far greater ease than any other Indian language, next to their own, if they simply mastered its alphabets. The very considerable number of Sanskrit words that have been imported into our literature within the last 600

years have given it a high status amongst Indian Vernaculars, and this struck even Dr. Carey in the beginning of the nineteenth century when he eulogised this tongue (p. 78). Even Mirtunjay in his pompous and grandiloquent style praises our Vernacular in 1813, and calls it superior to all other Indian Vernaculars because of its being enriched by importation of Sanskrit words. He writes in the preface to his *Prabodh Chandrika*,

“অগ্ৰাণ্য দেশীয় ভাষা হইতে গোড় দেশীয় ভাষা উত্তমা
সর্বত্তমা—সংস্কৃত ভাষা বাহুল্য হেতুক ।”

[The language of Gaur (Bengal) is better than all other languages because in it predominates the element of Sanskrit which is the very best and peerless amongst the languages of the world.]

The plain and simple style of the writers of theology and Jurisprudence, characterised by close reasoning and intellectuality, could not alone satisfy the enlightened people of Bengal, who, now acquainted with the treasures of English literature, wanted to introduce in our prose literary beauties after the models of Johnson's *Rambler* and Addison's *Spectator*. They now set themselves right earnestly to the task of decorating the style. We have observed that the efforts of the Pundits to embellish the Bengali style had become abortive; their high-sounding jargon disfigured the Bengali language rather than

producing any æsthetic effect. Those who imitated the English style and tried to imitate the syntactical forms and idioms of English wrote ridiculous Bengali which was hardly intelligible.

This was the state of things about 1840—1850. The simple style of the old school was there ; the pompous Sanskrit imitations displaying the follies of the pedantic writers, rather than showing their learning, was there ; the syntactical forms of English rendered Bengali style complicated and unintelligible. But none of these satisfied the growing literary taste of the Bengali youth who wanted to import classical dignity into Bengali on the one hand and the vigour of the English prose on the other. The attempts, however, continued and we shall presently see that exhortations and poetical outbursts after the manner of English soon became the craze of the Bengali literary aspirants. Iswar Gupta's prose style shows some of the characteristics of this epoch of our literature.

কোকিল বসন্ত আগমনে—মধুকরকর প্রফুল্ল-পঙ্কোজ মধুপানে—
চাতক নবনীল-নীরদ-নির্গত নীর পানে—চকোর পরিপূর্ণ শরদিন্দু সুধা
পানে—ভুজঙ্গ সুশীতল মৃৎল দক্ষিণ সমীরণ সেবনে—সাধবী স্ত্রী পতিসুখ
সম্ভোগে—রসিকজন রসালাপ আশ্বাদনে—এবং দরিদ্র ব্যক্তি প্রচুর ধন
প্রলাভে যে প্রকার সুখানুভব না করে ভাবগ্রাহী অনুরত জনেরা ভারত-
চন্দ্রের প্রণীত রস-ভেদের কবিতা পাঠেও ততোধিক সুখানুভব গ্রহণ
করিয়া থাকেন। (Typical Selections, Vol. II, p. 1815.)

How very strained and queer do his attempts appear to us, though at the time the passage was written it elicited admiration from his contemporaries ! Let me take another extract :—

বঙ্গভাষা ভূষিত প্রাচীন পদ্য পুঞ্জ এবং তত্তৎ প্রচারক পুরাতন কবি-
কদম্বের জীবন-চরিত সংগ্রহ পূর্বক সাধারণের সুগোচর করনার্থ আমি প্রায়
দশ বৎসর পর্য্যন্ত প্রতিজ্ঞা পথের পথিক হইয়া প্রতিনিয়তই উৎসাহের
চালনা করিতেছি।” (Typical Selections, Vol. II, p. 1809.)

We have seen that Iswar Gupta's prose failed equally in its attempts to reproduce the grandeur of Sanskrit and became almost rabid in attempting to introduce alliteration in many of his prose-passages. We shall cite another example from a contemporary writer who had achieved some distinction at the time. It is Babu Mahendranath Roy. His was the first attempt to write a brief sketch of the Bengali literature. It was a small treatise and does not show any research. He did not take adequate pains like the great pioneer in the field—his contemporary Iswarchandra Gupta,—in collecting materials for his task. The historical sketch written by him is verbose and scarcely throws any light on the topics dealt with. His prose, though occasionally simpler and less complicated than Iswar Gupta's, often shows the poetic fervour (now lost on us) of the style of the Prabhakar.

‘কাব্যশাস্ত্র পাঠের উপকার সমূহ এ প্রকার দেদীপ্যমান আছে যে
সুধীমাত্রেরই তাহা অক্লেশে বোধগম্য। পরন্তু অস্বদেশীয় কতিপয় নৈয়ায়িক

ভট্টাচার্য্য ও তদিতর ব্যক্তিগণের কাব্যের উপর যৎপরোনাস্তি বিচার ও
 দ্বেষ আছে। তাঁহারা বোধ করেন এই শাস্ত্রের কেবল বালকমনো-
 হারিনী কথাতেই পর্য্যবসান; এবং তৎকরণক কোন বিশেষ উপকার
 হওয়া দূরে থাকুক, বরঞ্চ তাহাতে বুদ্ধির স্থূলতা জন্মে; সুতরাং এ শাস্ত্র
 অধ্যয়ন না করাই শ্রেয়ঃ। কিন্তু এইরূপ অকিঞ্চিংকর আপত্তি করিয়া
 এককালে সমগ্র কাব্যশাস্ত্র অগ্রাহ্য করা, ব্যোম কুসুমের পুতিগন্ধভয়ে
 ঘ্রাণপথে অবরোধের ত্রায়। আমরাদিগের এরূপ অভিপ্রায় নহে যে
 • কাব্যশাস্ত্রকে ইন্দুকরনিকরের ত্রায় নির্মূল বলিয়া প্রতিপন্ন করি।”

The above is taken from the preface to
 Mohendra Babu's Selections from Bengali Poets
 published in 1852.

CHAPTER VI

VIDYASAGAR, AKSHAY DUTT AND OTHER WRITERS.

Two men arose at this stage of Bengali prose who rendered conspicuous service to its cause by their superior and talented writings. The first of these, was Pundit Iswarchandra Vidyāsāgar who had already risen to fame as a writer and a Sanskrit scholar of the Fort William College. His 'History of Bengal' and 'Bātris Sinhasan' was in course of preparation. These books at once showed how Sanskrit culture could be utilised in giving a higher merit and elegance to Bengali style. Vidyāsāgar's style effectually contradicted the comment made in certain quarters that there was no field in Bengali prose for importation of Sanskrit words. These critics were just in their remarks so far as they could judge from the conceited style of the Sanskritists of the old school whose ridiculous failures would naturally lead to such a conclusion. Vidyāsāgar gave to the Bengali prose a new status and a classic dignity. The wealth of the literary beauty of the classical style is prominent in his prose but the atmosphere was not clouded by vain pedantry. In the case of former writers big-sounding Sanskrit words impeded the course

of natural expressions, like huge and unwieldy blocks obstructing a stream. But Vidyāsāgar's style with well-chosen Sanskritic words—with similes and metaphors culled from the classic field—presents a unique model of refined literary taste and purity of expression. The flow of the style which produces every now and then uncommon pathos, is not impeded, but becomes heightened by the classical element that pervades the passages; and we read some of his best works today, as we read them forty years ago, with our eyes full of tears and hearts beating with emotion. This unique success was won by Vidyāsāgar, and no other writer in Bengal can approach him in this respect. Bankim Babu's novels once created a tempest of admiration amongst Bengali readers, but as other writers began to imitate him, his style became gradually somewhat commonplace and stale. Surely we do not enjoy it as we did in our early days. I remember that when for the first time I read his *Durges-nandini* (then only seven years old) I was at once carried into a region of romance, the great charm of the Dhabaleswar temple heightened by the presence of the youthful horseman, the hero of the tale,—captivating my fancy with indescribable sweetness. But the poetic situation since the publication of *Durges-nandini* has undergone a change. So many horsemen have since travelled by the

way-side, riding noble steeds in quest of their lady-love, and so many temples and secluded resorts have since served as their meeting places, that the great charm of the original no longer strikes a reader. Imitations from all sides and assimilation of the chosen words and phrases by a host of imitators that followed, have made Bankim Babu's style bereft of much of the charm which had made a great impression at the time of its first appearance; and Vidyāsāgar, though the nearest approach to his style was made by the writer of the *Kādamvari*, remains unapproachable and inimitable.

Specimens of Vidyāsagar's style.

I give below a few specimens of Vidyāsāgar's style from *Sakuntala*.

(1) “এই বলিয়া কিঞ্চিৎ গমন করিয়া রাজা দেখিতে পাইলেন, তিনটি অন্নবয়স্ক তপস্বিকন্যা অনতিবৃহৎ সেচন-কলস কক্ষে লইয়া আলবালে জল-সেচন করিতে আসিতেছে। রাজা তাহাদের রূপের মাধুরী দর্শনে চমৎকৃত হইয়া কহিতে লাগিলেন, ‘ইহারা আশ্রমবাসিনী; ইহারা যেক্রপ, এক্রপ রূপবতী আমার অন্তঃপুরে নাই। বুঝিলাম, আজি উজ্জানলতা সৌন্দর্য্যগুণে বনলতার নিকট পরাজিত হইল।’ এই বলিয়া তরুচ্ছায়ায় দণ্ডায়মান হইয়া তাহাদিগকে অবলোকন করিতে লাগিলেন।

“শকুন্তলা, অননুয়া ও প্রিয়দ্বদা নামী দুই সহচরীর সহিত বৃক্ষবাটিকাতে উপস্থিত হইয়া আলবালে জলসেচন করিতে লাগিলেন। অননুয়া পরিহাস করিয়া শকুন্তলাকে কহিলেন, ‘সখি শকুন্তলে! বোধ করি, পিতা কণ্ণ তোমা অপেক্ষাও আশ্রমপাদপদিগকে ভালবাসেন। দেখ, তুমি নব-মালিকাকুসুম-কোমলা তথাপি তোমাকে আলবালে জল-সেচনে নিযুক্ত

করিয়াছেন।’ শকুন্তলা দ্বিষৎ হস্ত করিয়া কহিলেন “সখি অনহ্নয়ে ! কেবল পিতা আদেশ করিয়াছেন বলিয়াই জলসেচন করিতে আসিয়াছি এমন নয় ; আমারও ইহাদের উপর সোদর স্নেহ আছে।”

(২) “এই বলিয়া তপোবন তরুদিগকে সম্বোধন করিয়া কহিলেন, ‘হে সন্নিহিত তরুগণ। যিনি তোমাদিগের জলসেচন না করিয়া কদাচ জল পান করিতেন না, যিনি ভূষণপ্রিয়া হইয়াও স্নেহবশতঃ কদাচ তোমাদের পল্লব ভঙ্গ করিতেন না, তোমাদের কুসুমপ্রসবের সময় বাঁহার আচ্ছাদনের সীমা থাকিত না, অগ্নু সেই শকুন্তলা পতিগৃহে বাইতেছেন, তোমরা সকলে অনুমতি কর।”

[(1) “The Raja advancing a few steps saw three young maidens of the hermitage coming with small water-pots to water the plants. He was struck with the beauty and grace of the maidens and thought within himself “They undoubtedly belong to the hermitage, but such rare beauties I have none in my palace. I feel now that the woodland creepers far excel those of the royal garden.” Thinking in this strain he took his stand behind a tree and watched them.

“Sakuntala by this time arrived with her two attending maids Anasuya and Priaymbada, and began to water the plants. Anasuya humorously told Sakuntala : “Dear friend, it appears that father Kanva loves these plants of the hermitage even better than you. You are delicate as a jasmine just bloomed, yet he has appointed you to water the plants.” Sakuntala sweetly

replied with a smile, "It is not merely because my father has wished it that I do this task, I too have a brotherly affection for these flower-plants."]

[(2) "He addressed the trees of the hermitage and said "Oh ye trees—she who never drank a drop to quench her thirst before watering you,—who, though fond of wearing wreaths, never had the heart even to pluck new shoots, and whose joy knew no bounds when the plants first flowered—she—your dear Sakuntala—is going to her husband's house ! Do you nod your silent approval."]

The book *Sakuntala* from which the above quotations are made was written in 1856. More than 64 years have elapsed since, but the Bengali style has lost nothing of its naive charm. Its elegant flow and easy grace, no less than its rigid classic purity are appreciated to-day, as they were when the book first appeared before the public.

This style came upon the pundits as a surprise. They wondered that one of them could write such a simple style, though acquainted with Sanskrit as well as they, while writing on classical subjects. One scholar is said to have exclaimed when perusing a book written in a simple style "What is this ? The style is an imitation of *Vidyāsāgar* ! It may be understood by all !" —implying that if a style were easily understood, it would not be worthy of a

Pundit ! For a Pundit, to keep up his dignity as an author, must write a style which would be beyond the comprehension of ordinary readers.

The other man of whom I have already spoken, is Babu Akshayakumar Dutta. He does not always write a simple style. There are works in which he tries to be elegant and classical like a Pundit. In this respect he does not attain the perfection of Vidyāsagar, for his writings do not possess the same amount of elegance and emotional fervour, and his style is, after all, heavier than Vidyāsagar's. The latter's writings, though the classical model is not lost sight of, have the light speed of a stream with the musical sound of its ripples. Akshaya Dutta is always dignified and never void of a sense of proportion as the school of Pundits are, but in his writings we miss the life that still beats in Vidyāsagar's prose. Here is a specimen :—

স্বপ্ন দর্শন ।

মনোমধ্যে যে বিষয়ক আন্দোলন করা যায় স্বপ্নাবস্থায় তাহাই বা তদমুখ্যায়ী ব্যাপার সমুদয় দৃষ্ট হইয়া থাকে এ কথা যথার্থ বটে । গতকল্য সমস্ত দিবস বহু কায়ক্লেশে স্বকার্য্য সাধন পূর্ব্বক অত্যন্ত পরিশ্রান্ত ও কিঞ্চিৎ বিরক্ত ভাবাপন্ন হইয়া রজনী যোগে সংসারযাত্রা ও মানব চরিত্রের বিবেচনা করিতেছিলাম । সকলেই কোন না কোন প্রধান রিপূর্য বশীভূত হইয়া চলিতেছে ; কাম, লোভ ও লিপ্সা এই তিন প্রবল বাসনা মনুষ্যের সকল কার্য্যের প্রধান প্রযোজক । তবে ইহা স্বীকার্য্য

বটে, যে তাহারা সংপাত প্রাপ্ত হইলে স্বকীয় প্রকৃতি সজ্জিত করিয়া নিকলঙ্ক রূপ ধারণ করে। এই প্রকার চিন্তাস্রোতে অবগাহন করিতে করিতে আমার অলস বোধ হইল, অঙ্গ সমুদয় অবশ হইয়া আসিল, এবং নেত্রদ্বয় ক্রমে ক্রমে ভারাক্রান্ত ও নিম্নীলিত হইয়া অল্পে অল্পে নিদ্রাকর্ষণ হইল।

বোধ হইল, আমি সহসা এক বিস্তৃত ঘোরতর গভীর অরণ্য-মধ্যে প্রবেশপূর্বক ভ্রমণ করিতে লাগিলাম। প্রবেশ কালে উর্দ্ধদিকে নেত্রপাত করিয়া দেখি, এক উচ্চ কাষ্ঠফলকে ‘ভবারণ্য’ এই শব্দ বৃহৎ বৃহৎ অক্ষরে লিখিত রহিয়াছে। ঐ অরণ্যের কত স্থানে যে কত প্রকার কুটিল ও কণ্টকাক্রান্ত পথ দৃষ্টি করিলাম তাহা গণনা করিয়া শেষ করা যায় না। সেই বিষম স্থানে সমাগত হইয়া যাবতীয় মনুষ্যেরই দিগ্ভ্রম ও বুদ্ধিনাশ উপস্থিত হইয়াছে। প্রায় সমুদয় ব্যক্তিই উৎকণ্ঠিত ও ব্যাকুলিত চিত্তে ব্যস্ত সমস্ত হইয়া ইতস্ততঃ ধাবমান হইতেছে। আমি নানা প্রকার অপূর্ব কৌতুক দর্শন করিতে করিতে অরণ্যের অন্তর্গত বহুলোকসমাকীর্ণ এক প্রশস্ত স্থানে আসিয়া উপস্থিত হইলাম। তথা হইতে তিন দিগে তিন পথ আরম্ভ হইয়া অরণ্যের এক প্রান্তে পর্য্যবসিত দেখিলাম। পূর্বোক্ত স্থানস্থিত সমুদয় লোক সহসা ত্রিভাগে বিভক্ত হইয়া ঐ তিন মহামার্গে চলিতে লাগিল। ঐ সকল পথ কতদূর পর্য্যন্ত গিয়াছে এবং পথিকেরাই বা কোথায় গমন করিতেছে, তাহার অনুসন্ধান করণার্থে আমার পরম কৌতূহল উপস্থিত হইল। অতএব প্রথমেই যে পথে রূপ-লাবণ্য-সম্পন্ন মহোল্লাস বিশিষ্ট পরম সুন্দর যুবক ও যুবতীগণ গমন করিতেছিলেন, সেই পথে তাঁহাদের সমভিব্যাহারী হইয়া আমিও ভ্রমণ করিতে প্রবৃত্ত হইলাম। তাঁহাদের পরিধেয় বসনের সর্বস্থানে ‘আমোদ’ এই কএকটী বর্ণ লিখিত দেখিলাম এবং তাহাদের পরিচয় জিজ্ঞাসিয়া জানিলাম তাহারা প্রণয় পথের পথিক। তাঁহারা শ্রেণীবদ্ধ হইয়া গমন করিতেছিলেন, এক এক শ্রেণীস্থ লোকের এক প্রকার বেশ ভূষা ভাব-ভঙ্গী ও মুখশ্রী অবলোকন করিয়া আমার এইরূপ প্রতীতি হইল, যে ইহারা সকলে কখনই এক জাতীয় নহেন। উদ্দিষ্ট উৎসব সমাধানার্থ

সর্বজাতীয় প্রণয়ার্থী মনুষ্যেরা একত্র সমাগত হইয়াছেন। আমি তাহাদের সংসর্গী হইয়া চলিতে চলিতে এক অপূর্ব কোতুক দর্শন করিলাম; কতকগুলি শুক্লকেশ, লোলচর্ম্ম চলিতদন্ত বৃদ্ধ এই সকল পরম প্রীতিকর প্রণয় যাত্রী যুবকদিগের সঙ্গে গিয়া মিলিত হইয়াছে ইহাতে তাহারা কি হাস্তাপ্পদ হইয়াছে! তাহাদের কি যথার্থরূপে মিলিত হইবার সম্ভাবনা আছে? সকলেই তাহাদের প্রতি অঙ্গুলি নির্দেশ করিয়া হাস্য করিতে লাগিল এবং অবগত হইলাম তাহারা যে সমুদয় বয়স্কের সঙ্গ পরিত্যাগ করিয়া আসিয়াছে এবং যাহারদের মধ্যে গিয়া মিশ্রিত হইয়াছে, উভয়েই তাহাদিগের প্রতি কটাক্ষ করিয়া পরিহাস ও বিদ্রূপ করিতে থাকে?”

[“ It is true that those ideas and thoughts that work in our minds in a fully conscious state sometimes appear to us in our dreams when asleep, in more or less altered form. Yesterday after a whole-day's labour I was quite fatigued, and when night came on I yielded to various reflections about the different features of human characters and their temperaments. ‘Every one works here,’ I thought, ‘being led by some passion or lust, and it is the passion of the flesh that generally guides all human action. It is, however, also true that if a person be a right-minded one, these propensities transform themselves into impetus for noble action.’ While thinking in this strain a laziness came over me and my body became inert—while my eyes drooped low yielding to the summons of sleep.

“It appeared to me that I was suddenly ushered into a dense and unlimited forest-tract where

I began to wander about with unmeaning footsteps. On entering the forest as I looked up I saw the word "The world—a forest" engraved on a wooden placard fixed over the gate-way. In that forest I found an endless complication of crowded path-ways. In that dangerous place hundreds of human beings lost their head and were led astray. Almost all of them moved about in different directions with looks of embarrassment. I met with many curious objects and reached a spacious place where I found a large crowd gathered. I found three main roads starting from that central place and running towards their ends in three different directions. The crowd divided themselves into three divisions, each of which marched by one or the other of the three main roads. I felt a great curiosity to know as to where these people would be going and where the roads would end. I first went in company of those young men and women who, decked with fine costumes and proud of their handsome features, were walking in a jovial spirit by one of these roads. Each of these persons had the word 'Pleasure' inscribed on their dress, and when I enquired as to who they were, I was informed that they were travellers in the path of pleasure. They were walking in groups, and from their features and varieties of dress I was convinced that they did not belong to one nationality.

They seemed to have assembled there in order to take part in some particular festivity. I became their companion, and after having journeyed some distance met with a very curious spectacle. I found in the company of these young and gay persons some very old men who with their slackened skin and toothless gum created a feeling of humour and pity, becoming objects of ridicule to all. Could it be possible that these old men had any chance of mixing with the young gay people in the natural course of things? All marked and pointed them out and passed sneering remarks. I learnt on enquiry that they had eschewed the company of old men—who would be naturally their meet companions—in order to mix with these young men. But those old men whose company they had left, and the young men whose company they now joined both treated them with well-merited contempt.”]

This is Akshay Dutta’s classical style. I do not say that the passage is smooth and faultless in every portion of it, but it is evident that the Sanskrit model has been followed here with a happy effect.

The second sort of style in which Akshay Dutta made himself equally successful is that in which he has imported the vigour and enthusiasm of English without vitiating his Bengali prose. He has not followed too closely the idioms and

syntax of English so as to produce an exotic or grotesque effect. Here is an example from Akshaykumar Dutta's Bengali prose in which we find all the vigour that inspires an animated English speech imported with a commendable amount of success.

ON THE DEATH OF RAJA RAM MOHAN ROY AT BRISTOL.

“বৃষ্টল ! বৃষ্টল ! তুমি আমাদের কি সর্বনাশই না করিয়াছ ! আমাদিগকে একেবারে অনাথ ও অবসন্ন করিয়া রাখিয়াছ । যাহাতে অশেষ রূপ অমৃত-স্বাদ ফল উৎপৎসমান হইয়াছিল সে অলোকসামান্য বৃক্ষমূলে সাংঘাতিক কুঠার প্রহার করিয়াছ ।

সেই বিপদের দিন কি ভয়ঙ্কর দিনই গিয়াছে । আমাদের সেই দিনের মৃত্যুশৌচ চলিতেছে ও চিরকালই চলিবে । সেই দিন ভারত-রাজ্যের কলাগণশিরে বজ্রাঘাত হইয়াছে ! এ দেশীয় নব্য সম্প্রদায় ! সেই দিন তোমরা নিরাশ্রয় ও নিঃসহায় হইয়া রণজিৎ শূন্য শিখ সৈন্যের অবস্থায় পতিত হইয়াছ । দুঃখজীবী কৃষিজীবীগণ ! যে সময়ে তোমরা স্বদেশ ও বিদেশের জন্য অপরিপাণ্ড অন্ন প্রস্তুত করিয়াও নিজে স্বচ্ছন্দমনে ও নিরশ্র নয়নে অত্যপকৃষ্ট তণ্ডুলগ্রাসও গ্রহণ করিতে পার নাই, সেই সময়ে যিনি দুঃসহ দুঃখ পরিহার করিয়া তোমাদের সমুপ্ত হৃদয় শীতল করিবার জন্য ব্যাকুল ছিঁদেন এবং তজ্জন্য বৃটিশ রাজ্যের রাজধানীতে অধিষ্ঠান পূর্বক তোমাদের অজ্ঞাতসারে প্রত্যেক রাজপুরুষের নিকট স্বহস্তে লিখিয়া বিশেষরূপ কাতরতা প্রকাশ করেন, সেই দিন তোমরা সেই করুণাময় আশ্রয় ভূমির আশ্রয় লাভ হইতে চিরদিনের মত বঞ্চিত হইয়াছ ।” (ভারতবর্ষীয় উপাসক সম্প্রদায়, ২য় ভাগ) ।

[“Bristol ! Bristol ! what a dire calamity hast thou hurled upon our head ! Thou hast

made us completely helpless and benumbed all our energies! Thou hast, so to speak, laid axe to the very root of a tree that has hitherto borne rare ambrosial fruits for us!

“ Oh what a terrible day it was! The national mourning observed on that day is still going on and will go on for ever! Verily a thunder-bolt was thrown on the head of our national bliss on that day! Oh you—the rising generation of our countrymen, you lost your leader on that day and have become helpless like the Sikh army without Ranjit Singh! And ye that plough your lands—the unfortunate peasants of India, you are scarcely aware of the extent of the loss that you have sustained. At a time when producing profuse quantities of rice for consumption here and abroad, you could scarcely secure enough food even of the worst quality to keep your body and soul together, and spent your days in the utmost unhappiness shedding tears over your wretchedness, at that hour of great peril he spared no pains to alleviate your miseries by representing your case to the authorities—staying all the while in the capital of the Empire—and writing with his own hands to each one of the high officials applications which bore evidence of his greatest sympathy and good will; on that day you lost that one refuge whose kindness for you was unbounded!”]

But this is not all. Akshay Dutta shows a remarkable hand in another sort of style also. It is that in which he has successfully imitated the style of simple English scientific treatises. It does not shew the classical element in the least degree, nor does it attempt at infusing a new life into our tongue by inspired speeches. But simple and unassuming it is the style of common European text-books and primers, the avowed object of which is to disseminate a knowledge of science and natural geography amongst the masses. The second part of Charupath is written in this easy and graceful style.

Thus we see that this great writer employed his fine literary powers in three different ways. He achieved a moderate amount of success in giving his countrymen (1) a specimen of faultless classical Bengali, (2) vigorous imitation of English exclamatory utterances and eloquent exhortations, without vitiating the pure Bengali element which must be the main stand-point of every Bengali-writer and (3) last though not least that style which adapted itself to the understanding of the masses and taught them the elementary lessons of science. In the field of classical Bengali, Vidyāsāgar beat him as he did every other Bengali writer. In the sphere of animated and anglicised romantic style Bankim excelled him and revolutionised

our literature in a later age. But in the field of a pure scientific style his was the model which remained almost unrivalled till only lately Ramendra Sundar Trivedi and his colleague Jagadananda improved upon it by coining Bengali technical words from classical sources, so needed for the development of our scientific literature. Akshyakumar Dutta in the field did the pioneer's spade-work which must be gratefully acknowledged by all. With Charupath, Pt. II, I presume, most of my readers are quite familiar. The book reminds me irresistibly of the free use of cane on my back received daily from my quondam Guru, Bishwamvar Saha, lame of one leg, for my neglecting the lessons. So Akshay Dutta's scientific primer bears to me many painful associations of early days having been at one time a source of my constant tears in a far truer sense than any work of fiction has ever been to me in my after life. I give an extract from this book which was familiar to all Bengali children of the past generation.

“সমুদায়ে কত গ্রহ আছে, নিশ্চয় বলা যায় না। এ পর্য্যন্ত ১৫৭ এক শত সাতল্লখটা আবিষ্কৃত হইয়াছে। অন্য অন্য গ্রহ অপেক্ষা বৃহৎ গ্রহ সূর্য্যের নিকটবর্তী, তাহার পর শুক্র, পৃথিবী, মঙ্গল, বৃহস্পতি, শনি, হর্শেল ও নেপচুন গ্রহ যথাক্রমে সূর্য্যমণ্ডলের নিকট হইতে উত্তরোত্তর অধিক দূরে অবস্থিত রহিয়া তাহার চতুর্দিকে পরিভ্রমণ করিতেছে। পূর্বপৃষ্ঠায় সৌরজগতের যৎসামান্য চিত্রময় প্রতিক্রপ প্রকাশিত হইল। তাহা দৃষ্টি

করিলেই এ বিষয় সুস্পষ্ট প্রতীতি হইবে। ঐ প্রতিকল্প প্রস্তুত হইবার অনেক পরে অর্থাৎ ১৮৫১ আঠার শত একান্ন খৃষ্টাব্দে মার্চ মাসে বঙ্কান নামে আর একটি গ্রহ আবিষ্কৃত হইয়াছে। উহা সূর্য্যমণ্ডল ও পৃথিবীর মধ্যে কোন স্থানে থাকিয়া সূর্য্য প্রদক্ষিণ করে।” Charupath, Part II, Ed. 1855.

[“It is impossible to tell you the exact number of planets. Up to now 157 planets have been discovered in all. Mercury is nearest to the sun amongst these. Next to Mercury in distance from the Sun, are Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Herschel and Neptune successively. They all move round the Sun. A rough pictorial illustration of the Solar system has been given on the foregoing page. You will have a clear idea of the situation of the planets from it. A long time after the above sketch of the Solar system had been drawn, another planet named Vulcan was discovered in March, 1851. It moves round the Sun—its position being somewhere between the Sun and the Earth.”]

Before I conclude my lectures I should mention another style which was forming towards the middle of the nineteenth century—a medley of the grandiloquent classical style and vulgar colloquies, used first by Ramnarayan Sarma in his “Kulinkula-sarvaswa natak,” the first Bengali drama published in 1854. The author was born in 1822 A. D. in the village of Hari-nabhi, south of Calcutta. His father Ramdhan

The first drama
in Bengali.

Siromoni was known for his scholarship in Sanskrit. “Kulinkula sarvaswa” was written for the prize of Rs. 50 offered by Babu Kalichandra Chaudhury, a Zeminder of Rangpur, to the best treatise pointing out the evils of Kulin poligamy. This treatise took the shape of a drama opening with the usual speeches of the *sutradhar* and *nati* in the fashion of a Sanskrit drama. The style of this portion is naturally pompous, full of high sounding classical words—such as:—

(১) “কান্তে, এই সূচির সম্ভোগ সুখ নিধান মদন সামন্ত ঋতুরাজ বসন্ত সময় সমাগত, এমত পরম মহোৎসব সময় নিরুৎসুকা হইয়া কোথায় ছিলে ?”

(২) “সমাজমধ্যে অপরীক্ষিতা বিদ্যা অনগ্নিপরিশোধিত সুবর্ণ জাতির ন্যায় নিতান্ত বিশ্বসনীয় হয় না।”

[(1) “Oh my charming one, look there, the abode of sweet conjugal union—that reputed general of Cupid—Spring has just arrived. During this festive occasion which pleases every soul, where have you been loitering like one indifferent to one’s surroundings ?”

(2) “The learning which has not been examined at some social gathering, like gold not properly tested, cannot be always trusted.”

But close upon these high sounding words follows the stream of a very light colloquial style, such as —

(৩) “তা এখন আমি কি করি ? আগে কি অধিবাসের বরণ ডালা সাজাব কি পাড়ার মেয়েদের নিমন্ত্রণ করতে যাব ? কি অন্য কন্ম

কৰ্বেয়া ? না এসব পরে হবে, আগে মেয়েদের ডেকে এ সম্বন্ধে বলি, তাদের 'বে,' তারাও টের পায়নি। লোকে বলে “ওঠ ছুঁড়ি তোর বে” আমার মেয়েদের কপালে তাই ঘটেছে।”

You will observe the forms মেয়েদের and তাদের in the above extract. These are very interesting. I have already pointed out that the intermediate 'র' in the genitive তোমারদের, তাহারদের etc., which characterises the writings of the early part of the nineteenth century, owed its origin to the softening of the double letter “দে” into “রদে.”

Another book which enjoyed a great popularity in those days was the “Nava nari”

Nava nari and other books. or lives of nine eminent Hindu women, Sita, Sabitri, Sakuntala,

Damayanti, Draupadi, Lilavati, Khana, Arundhati and Ahalya Bai. This book was written by Nilmani Basak and published in 1852. The style of this book possesses the easy grace but not the classic beauty of that of Vidyasagar.

Vasava Dutta by Madanmohan Tarkalankar published in 1837 was also written in the above style. But the nearest approach to Vidyasagar's style was made in the works Telemachus and Kadamvari. These books while imitating Vidyasagar's mode of writing with considerable amount of success, certainly shew a more pompous style than that of their model.

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OPINIONS

“ HISTORY OF THE BENGALI LANGUAGE AND
LITERATURE ” (IN ENGLISH)

BY

RAI SAHIB DINESH CHANDRA SEN, B.A.

Published by

CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY

Price—Rs. 12. Demy 8vo, pp. 1030,

with illustrations.

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BANGA SAHITYA PARICHAYA

OR

TYPICAL SELECTIONS FROM OLD BENGALI LITERATURE

BY

Rai Sahib Dineschandra Sen, B.A.

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From a long review in **The Times Literary Supplement**, London, November 4, 1915—"In June, 1912, in commenting on Mr. Sen's History of Bengali Language and Literature, we suggested that

work might usefully be supplemented by an anthology of Bengali prose and poetry. Mr. Sen has for many years been occupied with the aid of other patriotic students of the mediæval literature of Bengal in collecting manuscripts of forgotten or half-forgotten poems. In addition to these more or less valuable monuments of Bengali poetic art, the chief popular presses have published great masses on literary matter, chiefly religious verse. It can hardly be said that these piles of written and printed matter have ever been subjected to a critical or philological scrutiny. Their very existence was barely known to the Europeans, even to those who have studied the Bengali Language on the spot. Educated Bengalis themselves, until quite recent times, have been too busy with the arts and sciences of Europe to spare much time for indigenous treasures. That was the reason why we suggested the compiling of a critical chrestomathy for the benefit not only of European but of native scholars. The University of Calcutta prompted by the eminent scholar Sir Asutosh Mookerjee, then Vice-Chancellor, had already anticipated this need it seems. It had shrunk (rightly, we think) from the enormous and expensive task of printing the MSS. recovered by the diligence and generosity of Mr. Sen and other inquirers and employed Mr. Sen to prepare the two bulky volumes now before us. The Calcutta Senate is to be congratulated on its enterprise and generosity."

From a review in *The Athenæum*, January 16, 1915—"We have already reviewed Mr. Sen's History of Bengali Language and Literature and have rendered some account of his previous work in Bengali entitled *Bhanga Bhasa O Sahitya*. Mr. Sen now supplies the means of checking his historical and critical conclusions in a copious collection of Bengali verse.....Here are the materials carefully arranged and annotated with a skill and learning such as probably no one else living can command."

From a review by **Mr. F. G. Pargiter**—in the Royal Asiatic Society's Journal—"These two portly volumes of some 2,100 pages are an anthology of Bengali poetry and prose from the 8th to the 19th century and are auxiliary to the same author's History of Bengali Language and Literature which was reviewed by Mr. Beveridge in this Journal for 1912.....The Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University who was consulted, decided that the best preliminary measure would be to make and publish typical selections. The University then entrusted that duty to Babu Dinesh Chandra Sen; this work is the outcome of his researches...There can be no question that Dinesh Babu was the person most competent to undertake the task

and in these two volumes we have without doubt a good presentment of typical specimens of old Bengali literature.....The style of the big book is excellent, its printing is fine, and it is embellished with well-executed reproductions in colour of some old paintings. It has also a copious index.

The
VAISNAVA LITERATURE OF MEDIÆVAL BENGAL
[Being lectures delivered as Reader to the University
of Calcutta.]

BY

RAI SAHIB DINESH CHANDRA SEN, B.A.

Demy 8vo, 257 pages

WITH A PREFACE BY

J. D. ANDERSON, Esq., I.C.S. (*Retired*)

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Sir George Grierson :—Very valuable book.....I am reading it with the greatest interest and am learning much from it.

William Rothenstein.—I was delighted with your book, I cannot tell you how touched I am to be reminded of that side of your beloved country which appeals to me most—a side of which I was able to perceive something during my own too short visit to India. In the faces of the best of your countrymen I was able to see that spirit of which you write so charmingly in your book. I am able to recall these faces and figures as if they were before me. I hear the tinkle of the temple-bells along the ghats of Benares, the voices of the women as they sing their sacred songs crossing the noble river in the boats at sunset and I sit once more with the austere Sanyasin friends I shall never, I fear, see more. But though I shall not look upon the face of India again, the vision I had of it will fill my eyes through life, and the love I feel for your country will remain to enrich my own vision of life, so long as I am capable of using it. Though I can only read you in English, the spirit in which you write is to me so true an Indian spirit, that it shines through our own idiom, and carries me, I said before, straight to the banks of your sacred rivers, to the bathing tanks and white shrine and temples of your well remembered villages and tanks. So once more I send you

my thanks for the magic carpet you sent me, upon which my soul can return to your dear land. May the songs of which you write remain to fill this land with their fragrance; you will have use of them, in the years before you, as we have need of all that is best in the songs of our own seers in the dark waters through which we are steering.

**From a long review in the Times Literary Supplement,
2nd August, 1917.**

The Vaisnava Literature of Mediæval Bengal. By Rai Sahib Dineschandra Sen. (Calcutta :—The University.)

Though the generalisation that all Hindus not belonging to modern reform movements are Saivas or Vaisnavas is much too wide, there are the two main divisions in the bewildering mass of sects which make up the 217,000,000 of Hindus, and at many points they overlap each other. The attempts made in the 1901 Census to collect information regarding sects led to such unsatisfactory and partial results that they were not repeated in the last decennial enumeration. But it is unquestionable that the Vaisnavas—the worshippers of Krishna—are dominant in Bengal, owing to the great success of the reformed cult established by Chaitanya, a contemporary of Martin Luther. The doctrine of Bhakti or religious devotion, which he taught still flourishes in Bengal, and the four lectures of the Reader to the University of Calcutta in Bengali here reproduced provide an instructive guide to its expression in the literature of the country during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The first part of the book is devoted to the early period of Vaisnava literature, dating from the eleventh century.

The Rai Sahib is filled with a most patriotic love of his nation and its literature, and has done more than any contemporary countryman to widen our knowledge of them. His bulky volume recording the history of Bengali Language and Literature from the earliest times to the middle of the nineteenth century is accepted by Orientalists as the most complete and authoritative work on the subject.

There is refreshing ingenuousness in his claim, “my industry has been great,” and the “forbearing indulgence” for which he asks if he has failed from any lack of powers, will readily be granted in view of the enthusiasm for his subject which somewhat narrows the strictly critical value of his estimates, but does not impair the sustained human interest of the book.

Chaitanya clearly taught, as these pages show, that the Krishna of the Mahabharata, the great chieftain and ally of the Pandava brothers, was not the Krishna of Brindaban. The latter, said the reformer, to Rupa, the author of those masterpieces of Sanskrit drama, the *Vidagdha Madhava* and the *Lalita Madhava*, was love's very self and an embodiment of sweetness: and the more material glories of Mathura should not be confused with the spiritual conquests of Brindaban. The amours of Krishna with Radha and the milkmaids of Brindaban are staple themes of the literature associated with the worship of the God of the seductive flute. But Mr. Sen repeatedly insists that the love discussed in the literature he has so closely studied is spiritual and mystic, although usually presented in sensuous garb. Chaitanya who had frequent ecstasies of spiritual joy; Rupa, who classified the emotions of love in 360 groups and the other authors whose careers are here traced were hermits of unspotted life and religious devotion. The old passionate desire for union which they taught is still dominant in modern Bengali literature not directly Vaisnava in import. As Mr. J. D. Anderson points out in his preface, the influence of Chaitanya's teaching may be detected in the mystical verses of Tagore.

Chaitanya and His Companions

From a long review in the Times Literary Supplement, 25th April, 1918:—

"This delightful and interesting little book is the outcome of a series of lectures supplementing the learned discourses which Mr. Sen made the material of his "*Baisnava Literature of Mediæval Bengal*" reviewed by us on August 2, 1917.

It is an authentic record of the religious emotion and thought of that wonderful land of Bengal which few of its Western rulers, we suspect, have rightly comprehended, not from lack of friendly sympathy but simply from want of precisely what Mr. Sen, better than any one living, better than Sir Rabindranath Tagore himself, can supply.

It is indeed, no easy matter for a Western Protestant to comprehend, save by friendship and sympathy with just such a pious Hindu as Mr. Sen, what is the doctrine of an *istadevata*, a "favourite deity" of Hindu pious adoration. In his native tongue Mr. Sen has written charming little books, based on ancient legends, which bring us very near the heart of this simple mystery, akin, we suppose, to the cult of particular saints in Catholic countries. Such for instance, is his charming tale of "Sati," the Aryan spouse of the rough Himalayan

ascetic god **Siva**. The tale is dedicated, in words of delightfully candid respect and affection, to the devoted and loving wives of Bengal, whose virtues as wives and mothers are the admiration of all who know their country. Your pious Vaisnava can, without any hesitation or difficulty, transfer his thoughts from the symbolical amorism of Krishna to that other strange creation-legend of Him of the Blue Throat who, to save God's creatures, swallowed the poison cast up at the Churning of the Ocean and bears the mystic stigma to this day. Well, we have our traditions, legends, mysteries, and as Miss Underhill and others tell us, our own ecstatic mystics, who find such ineffable joy in loving God as, our Hindu friends tell us, the divine Radha experienced in her sweet surrender to the inspired wooing of Krishna. The important thing for us, as students of life and literature is to note how these old communal beliefs influence and develop that wonderful record of human thought and emotion wrought for us by the imaginative writers of verse and prose, the patient artists of the pen.

When all is said, there remains the old indefinable charm which attaches to all that Dinesh Chandra Sen writes, whether in English or his native Bengali. In his book breathe a native candour and piety which somehow remind us of the classical writers familiar to our boyhood. In truth, he is a belated contemporary of, say, Plutarch, and attacks his biographical task in much the same spirit. We hope his latest book will be widely (and sympathetically) read."

The Vaisnava Literature of Mediæval Bengal

J. D. Anderson, Esq.—retired I.C.S., Professor, Cambridge University;—I have read more than half of it. I propose to send with it, if circumstances leave me the courage to write it, a short Preface (which I hope you will read with pleasure even if you do not think it worth publication) explaining why, in the judgment of a very old student of all your works, your book should be read not only in Calcutta, but in London and Paris, and Oxford and Cambridge, I have read it and am reading it with great delight and profit and very real sympathy. Think how great must be the charm of your topic and your treatment when in this awful year of anxiety and sorrow, the reading of your delightful MS. has given me rest and refreshment in a time when every post, every knock at the door may bring us sorrow.

I write this in a frantic hurry—the mail goes to-day—in order to go back to your most interesting and fascinating pages.

History of the Bengali Language and Literature

Extract from a long review by Sylvain Levi (Paris) in the "Revue Critique" Jan. 1915;—(translated for the Bengalee).

One cannot praise too highly the work of Mr. Sen. A profound and original erudition has been associated with a vivid imagination. The works which he analyses are brought back to life with the consciousness of the original authors, with the movement of the multitudes who patronised them and with the landscape which encircled them. The historian, though relying on his documents, has the temperament of an epic poet. He has likewise inherited the lyrical genius of his race. His enthusiastic sympathy vibrates through all his descriptions. Convinced as every Hindu is of the superiority of the Brahmanic civilization, he exalts its glories and palliates its shortcomings, if he does not approve of them he would excuse them. He tries to be just to Buddhism and Islam; in the main he is grateful to them for their contribution to the making of India. He praises with eloquent ardour the early English missionaries of Christianity.

The appreciation of life so rare in our book-knowledge, runs throughout the work; one reads these thousand pages with a sustained interest; and one loses sight of the enormous labour which it presupposes; one easily slips into the treasure of information which it presents. The individual extracts quoted at the bottom of the pages offers a unique anthology of Bengali. The linguistic remarks scattered in the extracts abound in new and precious materials. Mr. Sen has given to his country a model which it would be difficult to surpass; we only wish that it may provoke in other parts of India emulations to follow it."

The Folk Literature of Bengal, by Rai Saheb Dinesh Chandra Sen, B.A., published by the Calcutta University. Demy 8vo, pp. 362. With a foreward by W. R. Gourlay, M.A., I.C.S., C.I.E., C.S.I., from long review in the **Times Literary Supplement**, **May, 13, 1920.**

"Those who are acquainted (we hope there are many) with Mr. Sen's other works, the outcome of lectures delivered to Calcutta University under-graduates in the author's function as Ramtanu Lahiry Research Fellow in the History of the Bengali Language and Literature, will know exactly what to expect of his present delightful excursion into Bengali Folk-lore. Mr. Sen thinks in Bengali, he thinks Bengali thoughts, he remains a pious Hindu, though his Hindu ideas are touched and stirred by contact with many kindly and admiring English friends. He is the better fitted to explain Bengal to the outer

world, for he loves his native province with all his heart. He has no doubts as to the venerable origins, the sound philosophy, the artistic powers, the suggestive beauty, all the many charms of the Bengali *Saraswatī*, the sweet and smiling goddess, muse and deity alike, the inspirer and patron of a long line of men of literature and learning too little known to the self-satisfied West.

A Hindu he remains thinking Hindu thoughts, retaining proud and happy memories of his Hindu childhood and of the kind old men and women who fed his childish imagination with old-world rhymes, with the quaintly primitive Bengali versions of the stately epics of Sanskrit scripture, with tales even more primitive handed down by word of mouth by pious mothers, relics perhaps of a culture which preceded the advent of Hinduism in Bengal. What makes Mr. Sen's books so delightful to us in Europe is precisely this indefinable Hindu quality specifically Bengali rather than Indian, something that fits itself with exquisite aptness to what we know of the scenery and climate of the Gangetic delta, where Mr. Sen was born, and where he has spent the life as a schoolmaster in Eastern Bengal, a land of wide shining mires and huge slow moving rivers where the boatman sings ancient legends as he lazily plies the oar and the cowherd lads on the low grassy banks of Meghna and Dhaleswari chant plaintive rhymes that Warren Hastings may have heard as he "proceeded up country" in his spacious "bugderow."

All these pleasant old rhymes and tales Mr. Sen loves with more than patriotic emotions and admiration and this sentiment he contrives to impart to his readers, even through the difficult and laborious medium of a foreign language."

Jules Bloch—"I have just finished the romantic story of *Chāndravatī* (given in the Bengali *Ramayanas*). May I congratulate you on the good and well deserved luck of having discovered her after so many others and having added that new gem to the crown of Bengali Literature.

I cannot speak to you in detail of your chapters on the characteristics of the Bengali *Ramayanas* and on *Tulsidas*, I had only to learn from what you say and thank you for helping me and many others to get a little of that direct understanding and feeling of the literary and emotional value of those poems in general and *Krittivās* in particular. I hope your devotion to Bengali Literature will be rewarded by a growing popularity of that literature in India and in Europe; and also that young scholars will follow your example and your direction in continuing your studies, literary and philological.

Sir George Grierson—"I must write to thank you for your two valued gifts of the "Folk Literature of Bengal" and "The Bengali Ramayanas." I delayed acknowledging them till I had read them through. I have been greatly interested by both, and owe you a debt of gratitude for the immense amount of important information contained in them.

I add to this letter a few notes which the perusal of your books has suggested to me. Perhaps you will find them useful.

I hope that you will be spared to us to write many more such books."

Dr. William Crooke, C.I.E., Editor of "Folk Lore"—"I have read them (Folk Literature of Bengal" and "The Bengali Ramayanas") with much interest. They seem to me to be a very valuable contribution to the study of the religion and folk lore of Bengal. I congratulate you on the success of your work and I shall be glad to receive copies of any other work which you may write on the same subjects."

H. Beveridge—"Of the two books I must say that I like best the Bengali Ramayanas. Your book on Bengali folk lore is also valuable (from a letter of 12 pages containing a critical review of the two books.)

From the Times Literary Supplement, April 7, 1921.

"The Bengali Ramayanas" by Rai Saheb Dinesh Chandra Sen (published by the University of Calcutta).

The Indian Epics deserve closer study than they have hitherto received at the hands of the average Englishmen of culture. Apart from the interest of the main themes, the wealth of imagery and the beauty of many of the episodes, they are storehouses of information upon the ancient life of India and a key to the origin of customs which still live. Moreover they show many curious affinities to Greek literature which suggest the existence of legends common to both countries. The Ring of Polycrates is reproduced in other conditions in the "Sakuntala" the *Alcestis* has its counterpart in the story of Savitri, and the chief of Pandavas descends into hell in the manner of Odysseus though on a nobler errand.

The main theme of these lectures is the transformation of the old majestic Sanskrit epic as it came from the hands of Valmiki to the more familiar and homely style of the modern Bengali versions. The Ramayana, we are told, is a protest against Buddhist monasticism, the glorification of the domestic virtues, proclaiming that there is no need to look for salvation outside the home. The Bengali versions, which

reducing the grandeur of the heroic characters, to the level of ordinary mortals, bring the epic within the reach of the humblest peasant; they have their own virtues, just as the simple narrative of the Gospels has its own charm, though it be different in kind from that of Isaiah's majestic cadences. Thus in the Sanskrit poem "Kauçalya" Rama's mother is sacrificing to Fire when she hears of her son's exile; she does not flinch, but continues the sacrifice in the spirit of Greek tragedy, merely altering the character of her prayer. In the Bengali version she becomes a woman, giving vent to lamentations, such as one hears every day in modern India. In the Nibelungeulied one sees the same kind of transformation from the old Norse sagas to the atmosphere of mediæval chivalry.

The author approaches his subject in that spirit of reverence which is the due of all great literature, and to him, Valmiki's Ramáyana is the greatest literature in the world. The fact does not blunt his critical faculty; rather does it sharpen it, for, as he says in the preface, "historical research and the truths to which it leads do not interfere with faith," neither do they stand in the way of admiration. He sees more in the Ramáyana than the mere collection of legends into a Sanskrit masterpiece from which various versions have been made from time to time. He shows us how, as the centuries proceeded, each successive version was influenced by the spirit of the age, how the story became adapted to the purposes of religious propaganda, how in the interests of the Vaisnava cult the hero Rama became the divine avatar of Vishnu, even at the risk of absurd situations. He takes us through the age of the Sakti influence, of Ramananda's philosophy and its revolt against Mahomedan iconoclasm, of the flippant immorality of the eighteenth century. "These Bengali Ramáyanas" he says, "have thus quite an encyclopædic character, comprising, along with the story of Rama, current theologies, folk-tales and the poetry of rural Bengal of the age when they were composed." To him the Ramáyan is a yellow primrose, but it is something more, * * * * To the student of folk-lore these lectures are to be recommended as an earnest and loving study of a fascinating subject."



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